

EASY TO ASSEMBLE - LOOKS JUST LIKE



THE REAL THING - HEAR IT 'CHOO CHOO'!



Directed by TODD HAYNES Starring ROONEY MARA, CATE BLANCHETT, KYLE CHANDLER Released 27 NOVEMBER

Eye contact across a busy shop floor is all it takes for an intense love affair to blossom in Todd Haynes' beaming masterpiece.

arol is a love story. Like all great love stories, its power comes from the universal emotion soaring beneath its specific concerns. The film owes a debt to the immaculate prose of Patricia Highsmith's 1952 source novel – not to mention her social daring in writing a sophisticated and beautiful novel of love between two women at a time when that love was defined legally and morally as 'obscene'. Haynes' adaptation is up there with Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* as an example of how to retain the soul of a book while transforming it for maximum cinematic effect.

To be believed, love stories need to capture the steps in between meeting an attractive stranger and falling in love with them. Love is magic. No one can define it so the spell that conjures it needs to make sense.

In Haynes' previous films, love has sometimes spelled bad news. In *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story*, smothering parental love is a factor in the development of the singer's fatal anorexia. In *Safe*, Julianne Moore retreats not just from love, but from the whole toxic world. *Far from Heaven* shares a 1950s American setting and a melodramatic gay love story with *Carol* and yet there is something more melancholic at work – a result of Moore's fearful approach to the fact that she is in love with a black man. The forces of intolerant society are more oppressively felt and Haynes plays his hand a little archly at time. *Carol* is always as earnest as a kiss.

The storytelling is as clear as a polished windowpane. Everything serves the point that love is the still heart of a chaotic world: the frosted purity of the colours, the stately pacing, the yearning score by Carter Burwell, the way that Ed Lachman's camera always drinks in a space before dialogue kicks in which in turn creates a graceful rhythm. Haynes conducts all elements as individual instruments that come together in one harmonious chord which means the most primal and wondrous of feelings.

The core of *Carol* is established in a fusion of timelines that, within the first few minutes, shows the end, the beginning and key images that recur: Therese (Rooney Mara) watching through a window; a glimpse of Carol (Cate Blanchett); a toy train on its tracks. The train is what brings the pair together for the first time. It's the item that Carol purchases while Christmas shopping in the department store where Therese works. Their mutual attraction is shown as something more lasting than lust from the outset, although intimacy is not something that can take place without a precise series of steps.

The dialogue is as carefully calibrated as all else in this film. Everyone is exact but not too eloquent. They hit their mark when it's their turn to speak, saying no more or no less than what will move things along. Flirtation is a question of reading between the lines. Haynes' taste for rendering surfaces that are pregnant with underlying tension is the ideal way to infer that the homophobic social context is driving them to a dance of delicate wording.





"There are no dolls, no spankings, no women playing men, no gold trousers, just two women walking towards one another until they can't get any closer."

"I have a friend who told me I should be more interested in humans," says Therese, sitting straight-backed by the piano in Carol's family home.

"How's that going?" says Carol, from a distance.

"It's going well, actually."

The women exchange a look that cannot be mistaken. They are often exchanging looks. They cannot stop stealing glances only to find that the other is stealing one too, meaning that they are both giving as well as taking. Lachman's camera catches one pair of eyes looking, its subject

looking right back and the meaning that sparks as the women connect. They are a pair matching each other step-for-step down a social back-road of queer intimacy, acting the conventional parts while in public and for a long time while in private, too.

The stakes for Carol are high. She is a woman of the world with a young child and a husband who won't be divorced easily. Kyle Chandler as Harge is a desperate man rather than a cruel one, wont to charge back into the familial home where he no longer lives. If the film has an antagonist it is Harge with his braying, undignified, vengeful death throes. But Haynes – even more than Highsmith before him – takes pains to enable his suffering to find full voice. He sympathises with Harge so that none of his characters have to. The same is true of Richard (Jake Lacy), Therese's jovial and handsome boyfriend who is introduced when the film begins. We see jilted and confused men with no comprehension of the nature of the love that is spiriting their women away.

Therese is comparatively free of baggage. She is box fresh at 19 years old. Why does she stick around? The clue's in the title. And yet this story is rewarding because it engages with potentially deal-breaking facts rather than just letting characters smoothly surf the waves of a narratively-concocted destiny. *Carol* is about lovers meeting at different times in their lives with different levels of experience. They can't mean the same thing to one another. This could doom them or it could mean they live in complementary harmony forever.

It's important that their ending is not inevitable. Love contains no promise of anything other than one self-contained moment at a time. Haynes understands this and presents a series of crystalline vignettes that pave the path that Therese and Carol take together. Or to be more literal: Carol



drives her willing passenger Therese around in a car. Her position at the controls is telling but while she has the navigation skills to steer, Therese has the heart to will them onwards.



Rooney Mara's voice is scratchy like a dust-coated longplayer. She summons raw words that keep Carol listening. She plays a young woman with an intense soul. A red and yellow beret on top of her serious face shows the youthful spirit that leaks out despite her focus on adult affairs. She is interested in photography (modified from theatre design in the book) and this translates to a watchful presence. Mara's genius is in conveying so much feeling in a character that doesn't have much drama apart from that which boils within. She tries to keep her face composed and stoic so when Carol moves her to smile and her dimples come out, it is a charming surrender. Mara is established as a committed performer. This has been true since she gave herself over to David Fincher's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. Here, the layers of her performance are exceptional. Every fibre of her being seems to be engaged in the stifling of feeling, yet she has given Therese such inner life that there is electricity emanating from her mere presence. Her Therese is hungry for authentic experience more than she is young and vulnerable.

Carol is older but more vulnerable for it. Her escape from the domestic bubble where she was safely closeted makes her a target for the same condemnation that plagued queer appetites in *Far from Heaven*. Blanchett is an actress who has set standards for her own performances so high that the revelation is not that she's great but that she's great in a new, sophisticated outsider way. While Therese's nails are bitten-

down and unvarnished, Carol's are manicured talons. Sandy Powell has costumed her to be every inch the debonair 1950s socialite. She has the figure, looks, manners and wits of a married woman of her class. It's her armour, her camouflage and her charm. She knows who she is. She knows that to give herself the best chance of survival she must tend to the details that she can control. She is an outsider styled to be irresistibly but conventionally attractive.

This is also Haynes' modus operandi. It's funny that a film pegged as "a lesbian love story" narratively and tonally is the director's straightest film to date. There are no dolls, no spankings, no women playing men, no gold trousers. There aren't even gay bars, just two women walking towards one another until they can't get any closer.

Carol is a love story. It presents love as a white-hot cocoon that attains meaning from its contrast with a stormy outside. Love cannot save you from walking in the open in the climate of your time. Love is nothing to do with this. Love is a profound personal language that can make sense of a world that cannot make sense of it. SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN

ANTICIPATION.

Everyone is swooning over Carol.



ENJOYMENT.

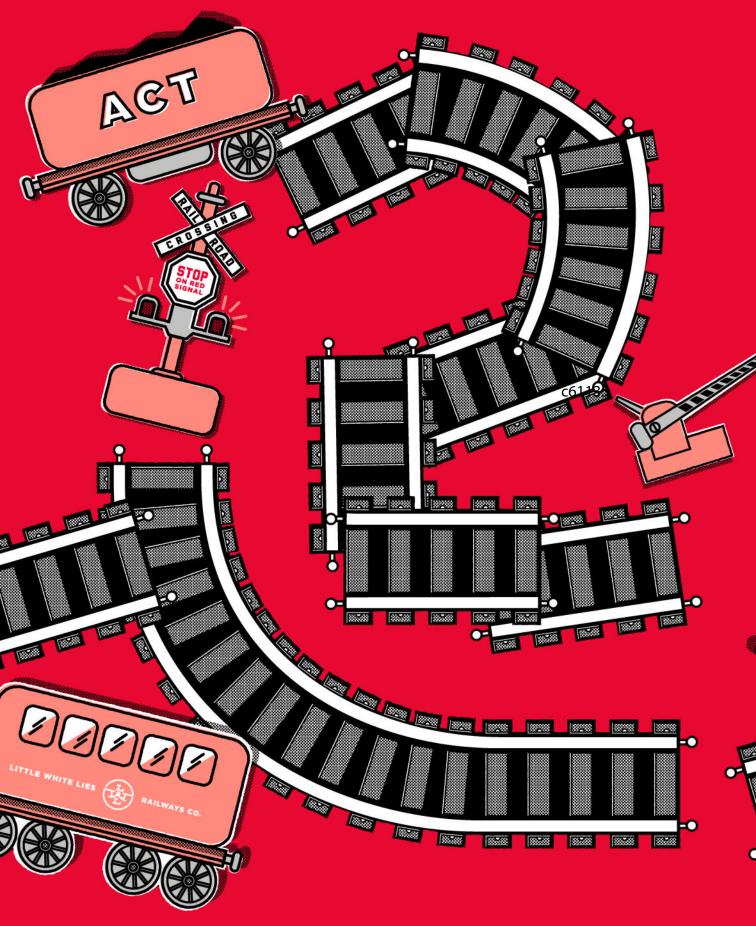
Each frame is a cinematic essence of love.



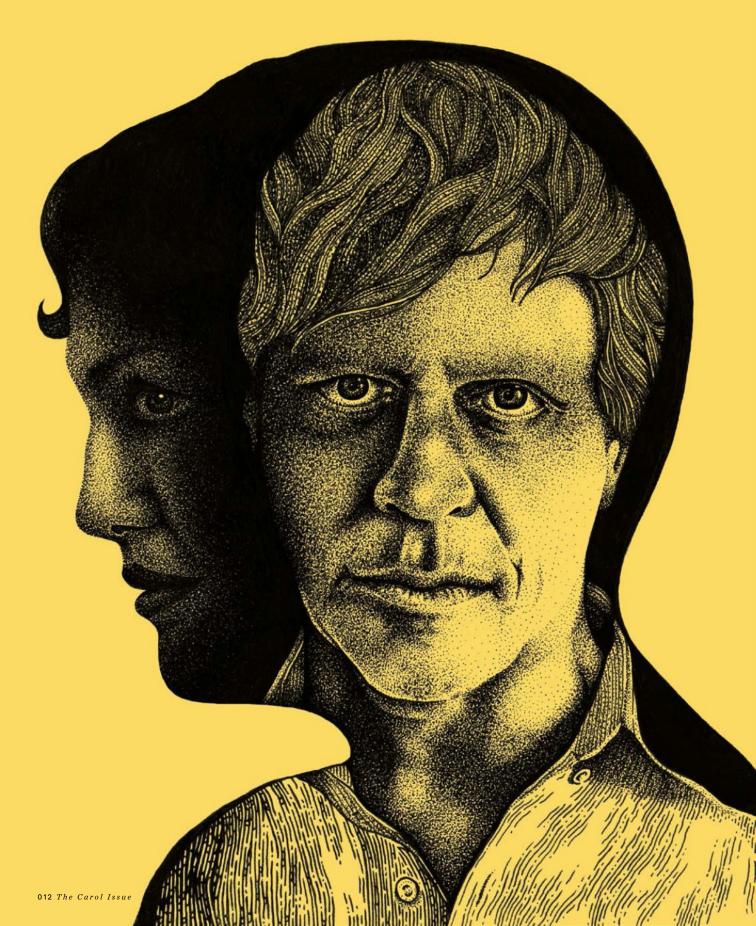
IN RETROSPECT.

One of the most beautiful love stories ever told.











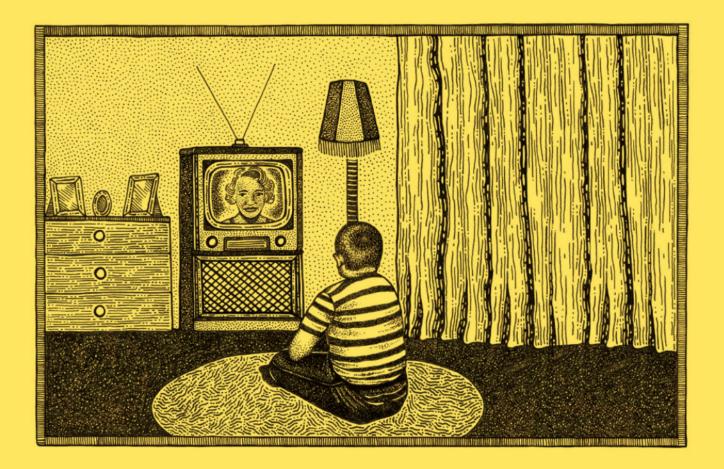
MUSINGS ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS BY THE FILM DIRECTOR TODD HAYNES.

PATRICIA HIGHSMITH

"The first time I came into contact with Patricia Highsmith was unquestionably Strangers on a Train. The film rather than the book. The attraction was instant. I think that film is a beautiful marriage of Highsmith's sensibility with that of Hitchcock's. It remains one of the most extraordinary of his extraordinary career. That would be the beginning of my fascination with what she could do as an artist. I've now read a whole read a whole handful of her classic crime novels, but I did not know about 'The Price of Salt'. It was only when this project came to me in May of 2013 that I first read it."

LOVE

"The script came to me, but I read the book first. And then I read the script, and then the book again. That book is something else. It's a really extraordinary piece of writing. It follows through her career of criminal subjects in the most interesting way. It's consistent in how it describes the overactive, festering subjectivity of its core subject - the character of Therese. In most if not all of her other novels, this subjective presence is a criminal mind. What she plays up so beautifully is the parallels between the amorous imagination and the criminal one, and how similar kinds



of creative work, postulations and hypotheses and fictive scenarios are constantly being conjured by this type of imagination. Of course, the kind of love she describes in the book was, at the time, against the law. It's a love which she barely has the language to describe. What I love about the book most of all is that it's universal – it's really about feelings experienced by the uncertain lover whatever your sexual orientation may be."

MELODRAMA

"I don't think the term 'melodrama' is fitting for this movie. It's not the way I approached the material. It's a term that gets used in a lot of inconsistent ways at the very least. Sometimes it's a pejorative term, sometimes it's a very specific term that comes out of film history and the history of literature. Melodrama as a term to identify a tradition in film is something that I hold in very high esteem, particularly when it comes to American film. There are so many extraordinary works. It's not that the genres don't overlap, but in this case, to me this is more of a love story. I looked back at this tradition in film as a way to organise my thoughts and work out how this story should be told, how it would look, and particularly how the point-of-view would be structured."

POV

"With Highsmith's novel, you're locked like a safe inside the singular point-of-view of Therese. In Phyllis Nagy's script, you get to share access to Carol and Therese. The classic melodrama doesn't locate point-of-view so rigidly in one character or another. They're very much observed narratives about social conditions and how those social conditions bear down on the domestic and romantic lives of the characters. There's this feeling that you're outside, watching in with this strange neutrality to events which effect people's choices. For some people, there's something not pleasing about these stories, they don't have a pay-off. For others, it's a way of offering a powerful yet subtle critique of social forces as they play out on people's lives. People like Douglas Sirk loved the melodrama. And so did Fassbinder."

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

"David Lean's Brief Encounter was a seminal point of reference for me when making Carol. The intense subjectivity in that movie, for instance, of the Celia Johnson character. It's her recounting this episode and it's all being remembered on the night it ends as she sits quietly with her husband in the living room. That sense of place and that sense of rootedness in her

experience isn't at all like Sirkian melodrama. It's fascinatingly different. To me, they're both amazing cinematic traditions and I learn a lot each time I commit to learning more about a certain style or a certain director. But I like the differences – I think they're important to be aware of."

NAMES

"We were debating all along what the title of the film should be. Although, it was only really a question of whether to call it 'Carol' or 'The Price of Salt'. I think the latter is a famously murky but beautifully evocative title that no-one – even people who love that book and know it well – can entirely say they comprehend. So there were arguments against it as a film title. It was thought to be too prosaic and obscure. I still think it's a gorgeous title. There is something quite banal and ordinary about the title 'Carol', but when you see the film, it confirms that it's really the object of desire who conducts the energies of the film. It makes a great deal of sense, in the same way you'd call a film *Rebeccα* or *Lαurα* – largely unseen female subjects who nevertheless hold a great deal of power. So yeah, I think 'Carol' works."

CURES

"The concept of finding a cure for certain incurable afflictions is certainly a recurrent theme for me. It definitely has recurrent questions attached to what the whole notion of "cures" are. I think there's a critical question being raised about our notions of normalcy. I guess cures in my movies are always aligned against what are the traditional or repressive models of those things considered to be the norm. Characters are finding themselves - often against their own will - fighting against their own bodies. They're rebelling against the social norms. I guess Sαfe is the film which digs in the deepest to questions of recovery and immunity and what they mean. And also how disease itself recasts the notion of identity in so many interesting and troubling ways. And all of this, of course, comes out of questions that were circulating around the AIDS era in the late '80s and early '90s. In the case of Carol and Far from Heaven, it's a little different because it's dealing with the cure for love, and it's a cure of which you immediately find yourself questioning the validity. Where the agency of that is actually coming from. These attempts at "correction" ultimately fail, and you're left with those questions at the end of films like Superstar: The Karen Carpenter story and Dottie Gets Spanked, and Carol as well."

THE PAST

"I feel that going back to the past deepens and makes more exciting the journey or the transport that a film offers us. It gives us a window onto a different time, where we can see different kinds of experience. I also feel that in some ways, when period films have issues that reflect back – or forward – to contemporary issues, they're almost stronger



"EVEN THOUGH I MOSTLY MAKE PERIOD MOVIES, THEY ARE ALL CONTEMPORARY AT THE SAME TIME."



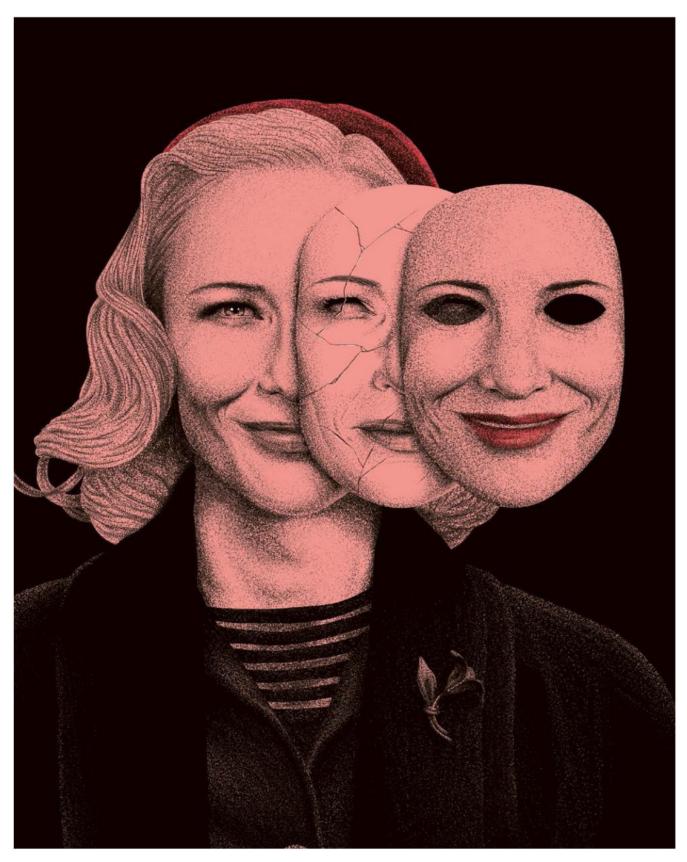
Their arguments can become more meaningful when it's the audience making those connections themselves. It gives us a displaced way of looking at ourselves. I think that's what ultimately draws me to the past. And I think it's also just my own selfish desire to keep learning about history and the specific social settings, traditions and customs. I want to get into the real intricacies and details of a certain time, but also I want to get into the language of the cinema associated with certain eras. That's part of my tutelage as I develop. When everything isn't immediately known or familiar, you have to look at it with keener eyes."

COMMERCIAL

"I don't really get requests to make my films more commercial. I think people know that my films aren't really conceived for those motives. When they have been, it's great, but money isn't what's precipitating these interests and desires. That said, even though I mostly make period movies, they are all contemporary at the same time. They're spoken in our current language, but they take a detour through the past. Yet I always think about commerce when I'm making movies. But only as an obstacle and a constraint with regard to what we can afford and how the creative solutions to our limitations have to be well planned. But no, it's never as if I'm freed from those concerns. Not in terms of the commercial impact or the success of the film, more the literal constraints of budget and doing what we need to do."

PEGGY

"What my Peggy Lee movie will be, when it happens and how it happens, will be as close to getting to the core of what her music is about. My goal is always to start with what's really unique about that artist has created within their field. I need to find a narrative and a cinematic parallel to what that is. That's really the goal. Peggy Lee is such an extraordinary and unique figure in mid-century American history and jazz. She combines the artificial with the genuine, the hot with the cold, the minimalist with the maximalist, she's just this amazing combination of things. The film will try and express some of that."





- ON Cate Blanchett -

"GOD, I'M GLAD I'M NOT ME."

- JUDE, I'M NOT THERE

atricia Highsmith published 'Carol' (née 'The Price of Salt') 17 years before Cate Blanchett was born halfway around the world in Melbourne, Australia, and yet the author's prose speaks to the actor's screen presence as though she had been watching her all her life. As the title character of Todd Haynes' immaculate adaptation, Blanchett inhabits the fictional character of Carol Aird with the same sense of divine preordination typically reserved for movie stars playing their real-life lookalikes, peeling a woman from the pages of a novel with the uncanny accuracy of a biopic reaching into the history books.

Playing a married mother whose romantic desires are smothered by the strict heteronormativity of upper-crust social circles in 1950s New York and the role she's been bred to perform in that pageant, Blanchett has found the part that most lucidly reveals – and enthusiastically exploits - her peerless talent. Indeed, among the most rewarding

aspects of her latest film, in which all of the various pieces are made more interesting in light of the long shadows they cast, is that Carol Aird tells us as much about Cate Blanchett as Cate Blanchett does about Carol Aird.

An elusive public figure for someone who's won two Oscars, appeared in two enormous franchises, and has been on so many Vogue covers that Anna Wintour must have her on retainer, Blanchett may not be much of a celebrity, yet one look at her face is enough to get the sense that she would've been a movie star even if cinema had never been invented. Combining the mannered grace of classic Hollywood with the fearlessness of a mumblecore ingénue, Blanchett can sometimes appear to be a welcome anachronism from a time when skin glowed and words were well chosen, and at others an idealised vision of the uncertain present, where emotions are raw and wounds fresh.

Several of Blanchett's pervious performances have flirted with combining these distinct modes: Her maternally menacing Galadriel from The Lord of the Rings swung like a pendulum between them, and her Oscar-winning turn as Katharine Hepburn in Martin Scorsese's The Aviator did the same to balance Hollywood's past with its present. Jim Jarmusch was so compelled by the actor's duality that he devoted an entire segment of Coffee & Cigarettes to playing with it - the short finds Blanchett playing both herself and her cousin, a Patti Smith lookalike who hopes to catch up during a coffee break at a movie junket, its premise winking at how the movie star's public persona is like a closed curtain in front of a brick wall. Jarmusch knows that Blanchett's performances betray nothing of who she is. It's not merely that the details of her private life are irrelevant, but that watching her work makes it inconceivable that she even has one, that she isn't just a remarkable trick of the light. "You are a movie star, nothing more!" Howard Hughes barks at Blanchett's Hepburn as one actress practically reanimates another.

Blanchett's characters often feel like a precise stroke of paint on an immaculate new canvas, but Carol Aird is different. Her marriage dissolving in the wake of an affair with a childhood girlfriend, Carol is a woman who isn't in the closet so much as she's draped behind a veil. Gilded with money, class and the rare majesty of the self-possessed, she's asked to choose between being a mother and a lesbian, but knows full well that she'll always be both. Often seen through a window, she's desperate to reconcile her appearance with its reflection. "I'm charting the difference between what characters say and how they really feel," declares one of Therese Belivet's young gentlemen friends while watching Sunset Boulevard for the seventh time. He's not the only one.

"Her mouth was as wise as her eyes," Highsmith writes, "and her voice was like her coat, rich and supple, and somehow full of secrets." Blanchett has always spoken with the full breath of a great musician, her every word exhaled with the sonorously hollow swoon of a tenor saxophone, sweeping out of her mouth like a gust of wind. Even when she uses it to ask Frankenberg's Department Store employee Therese about something as banal as a model train set, it's easy to understand why the clerk is swept off her feet. The smitten shopgirl can hardly fathom that her thunderstruck infatuation is already mutual. On the contrary, she can only assume that Carol looks at her as a life-sized version of the dolls stacked behind her, one that doesn't soil herself or need a pull-string to talk. She stares at her customer with the same awed stare that Blanchett typically inspires from her audiences - in that moment, it's impossible for Therese to conceive of the woman behind the façade, to imagine that Carol might exist in three dimensions.



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Highsmith's novel, inflexibly told from Therese's perspective, sees Carol from the outside only, as the object of its protagonist's affection. Her inner life can only be guessed and grabbed at, the reader carried along by the helpless inertia of falling in love. Phyllis Nagy's script takes a different approach. An intelligently aggressive feat of adaptation, Nagy's telling makes the bold decision to shine a light behind Carol's eyes and allow her to exist beyond the narrow confines of Therese's imagination. Blanchett vindicates Nagy's choice and then some, preserving the mystery that drives Therese's punch-drunk desire while also allowing us intimate access to Carol's longing. She allows us to appreciate Therese's fears of boring the unicorn who has just galloped into her life, and we also understand how painful it would be for Carol to let the one person as confused as she is get away from her.

This ability to play both sides at once is most lucidly foregrounded during the early scene in which Carol takes Therese out to lunch, aggressively pursuing a follow-up date while staring down into her drink, too nervous to steal more than a few desperate glances at the girl across the table. The obliviously enchanted Therese wouldn't dare to diagnose the older woman's anxiety for what it really is -Carol's vulnerability is just for us. "Tell me you know what you're doing," Carol's friend and former lover implores. "I never did," she responds with a smile wider than any we'll see again until the film's final image, in which she commits herself to the unknown, untethered, just another girl flung out out of space. For one brilliant, wordless moment, there isn't any difference between what she's saying and how she really feels. Maybe Hughes didn't know Hepburn as well as he thought 😵



BRAD PITT ANGELINA JOLIE PITT

By the Sea

Written and Directed by ANGELINA JOLIE PITT



In Cinemas December II



SURFACE

MOVIES ARE OPEN TEXTS, BLANK
CANVASES TO PAINT ON, EDIFICES TO
ATTACH IDEAS TO AND BUILD THEORIES
AROUND. IN THAT SPIRIT, LWLIES
SEARCHES FOR THE HOMOEROTIC SUBTEXT
IN FIVE VERY DIFFERENT FILMS.

TENSIONS



ILLUSTRATION BY
VIRGINIE MORGAND



THE SOCIAL NETWORK (2010)

WORDS BY
SIMRAN HANS

avid Fincher is interested in men. He is fascinated by the idea of fraternity; his films look at how men relate to other men at home (*The Game*), at school (*The Social Network*), at work (*Se7en, Zodiac, House of Cards*), even after work (*Fight Club*). There's an intelligent bro-ishness to Fincher's filmography, which wades through the mulch of contemporary masculinity, trying to make sense of it all with forensic curiosity. Yes, he is interested in men.

Aaron Sorkin's script for 2010's *The Social Network* states that Facebook (working title 'Face Mash') was born out of the bitter break-up between Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) and girlfriend Erica Albright (Rooney Mara). Yet, the film's central break-up scene isn't that famous, acerbic opening exchange. It's the passionate, emotional, ragefuelled monologue that Zuckerberg's former best friend and business partner Eduardo Saverin (Andrew Garfield) delivers after storming into Facebook's offices. "You set me up," says Saverin, breathless and on the verge of tears. The pain that pools in his eyes is that of an incredulous ex-lover.

The film is punctuated by small moments that suggest the bond between the former friends is more than brotherly. Take for example, the scene where Mark begins to explain Facebook's relationship status function to the clueless Eduardo:

"People are gonna log on because after all the cake and watermelon, there's actually a chance they're gonna-"

"Get laid."

"Meet a girl."

Fincher and Sorkin aren't the types to allow for anything

other than absolute precision. Eduardo's sexual ambiguity is deliberate. There's also a short sequence around the film's midpoint that sees Mark and Eduardo go on a double date (though it's more like a double fuck), locked in adjacent bathroom stalls with their respective groupies. The scene opens on Eduardo furiously kissing his date, though he pulls away abruptly, motioning her to listen to the happenings next door. She doesn't care, but Eduardo is rapt, straining to hear the sound of his best friend getting a blowjob. The scene cuts from the stall door to a shot of the boys standing smug and rosy-cheeked outside of the bathroom. Mark looks straight ahead. Eduardo looks at Mark.

Later, Eduardo turns up outside Mark's house in Palo Alto, drenched by the pouring rain. Is Fincher paying homage to Andie MacDowell's rain-soaked 'check-up' in Four Weddings and a Funeral? Is it still raining? Has Eduardo noticed? Mark punches "Wardo" hello with an excess of aggression/sexual frustration. "Wanna talk to me alone for a minute?" is Eduardo's clipped response, their private lovers' quarrel playing out in hushed tones. "I want...I need you," Mark tells Eduardo, for the second time in the film.

The Social Network is a story about the mixing of business and pleasure. It's about growing up and growing apart. It's about the demise of a relationship: the strain of long-distance love, the explosive break-up, the messy divorce depicted in the courtroom scenes. It's about jealousy, bitterness and betrayal. It's about heartbreak. It's the greatest unrequited love story of our time.



2 FAST 2 FURIOUS (2003)

WORDS BY
ANTON BITEL

uch ink has already been spilled on the polyethnic world in which the Fast and Furious franchise unfolds. The prologue to the first sequel, John Singleton's 2 Fast 2 Furious, illustrates this in microcosm, as whiter-than-white Brian O'Conner competes in a street rally with an African-American, a Latino and a half-Japanese. Here 'race' has a double-meaning, with people of different ethnicities unified by the American dream of driving a blinged-out, pimped-up motor to fame, fortune – and a cash prize. In a rare touch of realism, the white man wins.

Yet in this race to be on top, there is also sex, with automobiles used as the metaphorical vehicle for all kinds of interpersonal bumping and grinding. "When are you gonna pop my clutch?", master mechanic Tej (Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges) asks female driver Suki (Devon Aoki), before advising her to "Bring that body by the garage so we can work on that front end of yours." Yet in a manly world where macho drivers don't always like to "roll with skirt", the film's key relationship is the bromance between Brian and his old criminal 'homie' (Tyrese) who goes by the overtly pornified name Roman (or 'Rome') Pearce. This friendship comes with a (subversively?) homoerotic sheen to its pastel chrome surface.

Even if Brian is "willing to play ball" and work with the FBI and US Customs Service, he needs his former friend('s) back. Rome, however, is reluctant to rekindle their relationship (even if they celebrate their reunion with a close wrestle in the dirt). "When I needed your ass, you

"AUTOMOBILES ARE USED AS THE METAPHORICAL VEHICLE FOR ALL KINDS OF INTERPERSONAL BUMPING AND GRINDING."



were nowhere to be found," Rome complains - although it is unclear whether Rome is more annoyed because Brian abandoned him to become an 'undercover' cop, or because he crossed a heterosexual line. "Women", as villain Carter Verone (Cole Hauser) points out, "are a very powerful force" - and Rome, sceptically observing Brian's eye drift towards Customs agent Monica Fuentes (Eve Mendes), warns, "You're always getting in trouble over a female."

What Rome prefers, obviously, is, "You and me - just like the old days." And he gets it. For once these 'bros' have literally rear-ended Carter, they ride off together again into the sunset, with Rome promising to stay with his friend in Miami and "Keep you out of trouble, brae – you know what I'm talking about." When in Rome, do as Roman does...



THE GREAT ESCAPE (1963)

WODDS BY MARK ASCH

- "You speak Russian?"
- "Only one sentence."
- "Well. let me have it, mate."
- "La vas liubliu."
- "What's it mean?"
- "I love you."
- "'I love you'?! What bloody good is that?"
- "I don't know, I wasn't going to use it myself."

-Sedgwick (James Coburn) and Danny (Charles Bronson)

hat not one line of dialogue in The Great Escape is spoken by a woman is just the start of it. The code names, plots, and ingenious trouser-leg bags for dispersal of tunnel dirt have a high-spirited Boy's Own adventurousness, naturally fostering camaraderie and jokes such as the one when the escapees cover up a tunnel in their barracks' shower room just in time. Bronson is showering; Coburn seemingly just hanging about, but explains to the sentry: "I'm watching him. I'm a lifeguard."

As "the scrounger" Hendley, James Garner has the louche posture and soft, suggestive voice of a male hustler; the scene in which he lifts a guard's ID plays unambiguously as a seduction, from Garner's opening "Got a light?" to his invitation to continue the conversation in his room ("I'd better not..." the guard says, before slipping furtively inside), his contraband gift, and the guard's guilty refusal and flight.

In 'Bonds of Wire', a memoir of his time in the real-life Stalag Luft III, Kingsley Brown writes that the camp doctor would regularly "reassure" prisoners that "If you were meant to be queer, it would have happened long before"that the extremity of their situation might push prisonersof-war into one another's arms was a real preoccupation, at minimum. Garner's performance, and the partnership of butch Bronson and his fellow "tunnel king" Willy (John Leyton), who soothes Danny's claustrophobia through the escape, make it simple for modern viewers to second-guess the film's flag-waving masculinity.

That bonds forged within all-male environments are thick with homoerotic tension is a truth so universally acknowledged as to be exaggerated for comic effect even between teammates, or frat boys inside US colleges' "Greek" system (no homo!). Today's enlightened commentators reliably inform that such "bromantic" gestures serve to parody and preempt genuine emotion, but the stirring sentimentality of The Great Escape ultimately makes no distinction between straight and subversive readings. Garner, captivated by Donald Pleasance's ageing, ailing forger, takes him under his wing during the escape; when the older man dies in the younger's arms just on the wrong side of the border - like Ratso Rizzo and Joe Buck on that bus to Florida - Garner leans in to hear his fellow-officer's dying words: "Thank you for... getting me out."



TENNESSEE'S PARTNER (1955)

WORDS BY
PETER LABUZA

n today's ubiquitous media climate, politicians expect that every little scrap ever recorded of them will resurface to both scrutiny and parody. But the situation was quite different when Ronald Reagan ran for President of the United States in 1980. The former Hollywood actor became a symbol of not only the neo-conservative movement, but also a new rugged masculinity, branding his political image on the tough guys he played in Westerns. But if scenes from his gay western in 1954 had leaked, perhaps the election might have swung a very different way.

Tennessee's Partner was part of a series of films made in the mid-1950s between producer Benedict Bogeaus and director Allan Dwan at RKO, most starring the stern and lengthy John Payne. Adapted from Bret Hale's 1869 magazine story, Payne plays the titular Tennessee, a gambling man who spends most of the time at the "proper ladies house," where men eat, drink, play cards, and flirt with the women. Tennessee's poker skills and mean streak turn him into a target for the more unlucky, bitter men, but Reagan's stranger-in-town decides to defend the man from a bullet in his back, so the two become close friends and roommates.

Or perhaps more? Tennessee cares deeply for "Cowpoke", who awaits his new bride coming in from San Francisco, a cause for deep anxiety for the man's best friend. In the film's oddest scene, a nude Cowpoke wakes to find Tennessee undressing while sitting on the edge of his bed. "You have to marry a woman!" he exclaims in disgust toward the institution, while the calmly spoken Cowpoke sees marriage with an

"WESTERNS ABOUT MALE FRIENDSHIP BORDERING ON THE HOMOEROTIC ARE A DIME A DOZEN."



effeminate bliss. Tennessee tosses and turns in anxiety, while Cowpoke assures him no woman will come between the two. Turns out that the woman in question has a past with Tennessee and a history of running away with finances' money, so a scheme is put in place. So when Cowpoke feels betrayed and the two men brawl, the intense physicality of their punches only exacerbates their romantic emotions. The penultimate moment of the film, where Tennessee abandons his male friend to marry Rhonda Fleming, takes place in a graveyard - heteronormativity becomes a death sentence.

Westerns about male friendship bordering on the homoerotic are a dime a dozen, but it's fun to imagine a scandalous election year where clips of Payne and Reagan gazing into each other's eyes would challenge the candidate's narrative of hyper conservative masculinity.



RESERVOIR DOGS (1992)

WORDS BY REBECCA ELLIS

swear to god I watched a Quentin Tarantino Reservoir Dogs interview in which he claimed the film had garnered a cult lesbian following. En masse, he said, they held midnight screenings in suits and matching Ray-Bans. Sure, there was a lot to question here, but the notion seemed credible. All along those colour-coded name aliases were actually QT's subliminal metaphor for gay pride? Good one. At a surface glance Reservoir Dogs seems a gratuitous ejaculation of heteronormative maleness; a story written entirely for and about heterosexual white men with no female characters even close to the periphery. Some more pondering was required.

I figured the suit was key. A symbol of non-gender conformity, a sign of aberrant femininity and competing masculinity, a declaration of independence. Critics have considered the masculinity in the film and the unstable masculine identities of the "Dogs", which appear to merge both hyper-masculine and hyper-feminine codes; extreme violence, aggressively foul mouthed, morally abhorrent yet stylish, over analytical and emotionally volatile. This could surely draw parallels with the societal ideals concerning female sexuality and expected performances of femininity and passivity? What better way to rebel against the trappings of patriarchal society than donning a suit and shouting a few of the film's then record breaking 227 'fucks' at a midnight screening?

So certain of its iconic status in the gay community, I proposed to research the issue for a feature on alternate readings of sexuality within film. Then came... nothing. No interview. No cult lesbian following. Aside from a rather interesting looking all-female casting of the film in an Off-Broadway production entitled Reservoir Bitches, all I was left with after a frustratingly fruitless research period was an extensive knowledge of 'lesbian' synonyms and that there are no shortage of good looking, pooch loving lesbians hanging out in Silver Lake Reservoir Dog Park, LA. I then spoke to lesbian friends who had no strong feelings towards the film.

Much debate has focused on the undertones of gay male desire played out in the characters of Mr Orange and Mr White. Specifically, White's emotional attachment to Orange, Orange's inner conflict about his feelings towards White, and White's nurturing and cradling of Orange in the film's final sequences. The film could be labelled as the repressed face of '90s new queer cinema in its presentation of two characters' inability to express behaviour that deviates from the masculine world navigated/occupied by their peers. The deaths of both men could indeed be read as results from when they form a bond viewed as unacceptable by both the film world and society at large. This has not gone unnoticed in the world of fan fiction, with forums inundated with gay love stories such as 'Clowns to the Left of Me', 'God Only Knows' and 'Blood, Booze & Sex', the latter launching itself straight in at Number One on the list of things I wish I could unsee. In desperation I approached my bewildered lesbian friend with the query. Her response was "I guess we all love Steve Buscemi?" So there you have it. Lesbians love Steve Buscemi. There's a PhD thesis in there somewhere



WINNING LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS AND WORKING WITH SOME OF AMERICA'S GREATEST LIVING DIRECTORS, ROONEY MARA TELLS LWLIES HOW SHE HAS MANAGED TO PACK SO MUCH INTO HER SHORT CAREER.







ike a stolen glance between unacquainted lovers, fate had a hand in the defining chapter of Rooney Mara's story. When Carol first called back in 2011, Mara was faced with an agonising decision, one she looks back on with mixed feelings. "As much as I adored the script, I couldn't say yes," she confesses. "I needed time to live life a little bit before I could jump into another part." Such was the situation in which Mara found herself after David Fincher's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, for which she worked 12 to 16 hour days over the course of a year (by comparison, Carol was shot in two months).

It's unusual to hear an actor talk openly about the come down, although it stands to reason that switching off after immersing yourself in a character like Lisbeth Salander should be a long and painful process. "There was a long period after *Dragon Tattoo* where I couldn't imagine myself in anything," she reflects. "I was so exhausted. Emotionally, physically, I was completely drained. I would read things and I just couldn't see myself in the part. I felt like I didn't have anything left to give. I thought I would be bad."

By the time the conversation came back around to $C\alpha rol$, now with both Cate Blanchett and director Todd Haynes attached, Mara was ready. "I hadn't worked in almost a year," she recalls, "so I was really hungry to do something. It was an easy decision. Looking back, I can't quite believe I ever said no. It just seems so crazy to me,

because Cate is one of my favourite actors. I've looked up to her since... I can't even remember how long. The fact that I turned down a chance to work with her is absurd to me now. But that's acting. The choices I make so often depend on the head space I'm in."

If Blanchett's strong onscreen persona and classical elegance mark her as the Katharine Hepburn of her generation, then Mara is Louise Brooks - cool and exotic in an effortless, strangely accessible kind of way, a 21stcentury 'It' girl dropped in from the Jazz Age. Just like the mercurial silent era icon, Mara was born into affluence (her great-grandfathers Art and Tim founded the Pittsburgh Steelers and New York Giants respectively) but had a fairly normal upbringing. A relative latecomer to acting, she found her way into the movies in her early twenties via a handful of bit-part roles, before returning to college in New York where she graduated from Gallatin in 2010. And like Brooks, Mara is known for playing impulsive, sharp, sexual (but never submissive or promiscuous) women. Her performances, too, often fall somewhere between ethereal and naturalistic. There's a preciseness about her, from the way she moves and speaks - softly, always with purpose - to the subtle gestures through which she's able to convey a character's deepest thoughts and emotions. "Flung out of space" is how Blanchett's eponymous socialite so memorably describes Mara's Therese; a line that could just as easily have been written about the actor herself.







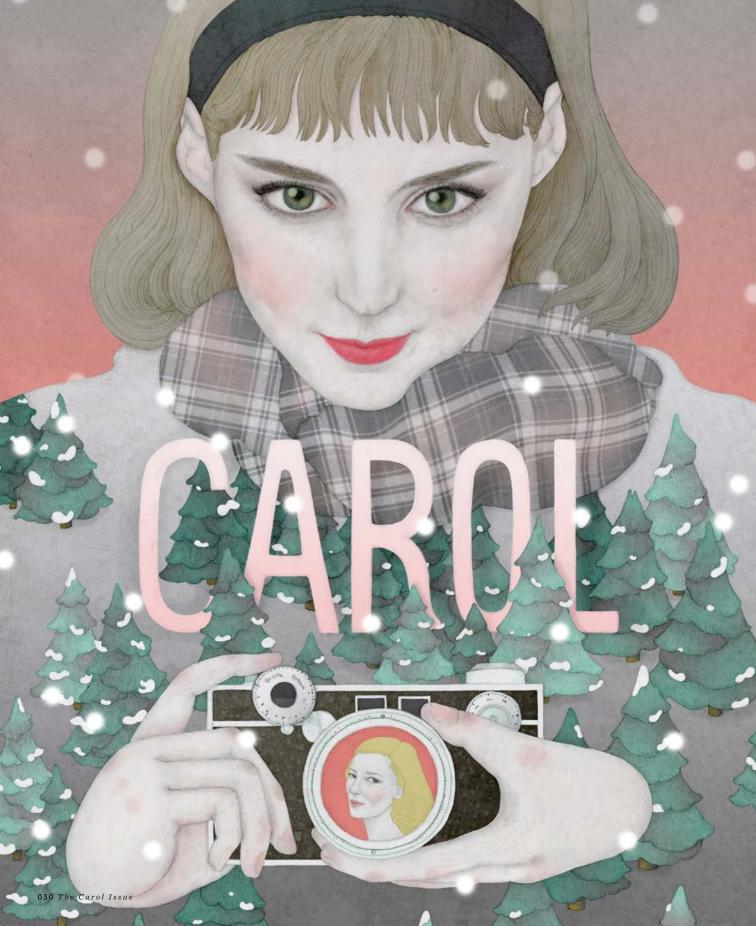
With the exception of the Aaron Sorkin-scripted The Social Network, which required Mara to "talk a mile a minute and squeeze seven pages into four minutes," every film she has appeared in this decade - from Dragon Tattoo to David Lowery's Ain't Them Bodies Saints to Carol - has seen Mara consciously embody the minimalist mantra 'less is more'. She's always looking to exploit the space between words, savouring the quiet moments that can have a lasting impact on the viewer. "I think you can convey a lot through silence," she says. "I've always been drawn to actors who are really good at that - Marion Cotillard is someone I could watch do anything, she just exudes so much feeling and emotion in everything she does. I could watch her doing laundry and it would be interesting. With Carol, the script already had those moments, but it's something I try to bring to every part I play. Emoting through silence is something that comes very naturally to me."

Back in May, Mara received the Best Actress award at the 68th Cannes Film Festival for Carol, and in September was presented with one of three Silver Medallion Awards at the Telluride Film Festival (the other two going to director Danny Boyle and documentarian Adam Curtis). At 30, Mara is one of the youngest recipients of the latter award, which is given to artists deemed to have made a significant contribution to the world of cinema. If bestowing what is effectively a lifetime achievement award upon someone

who got their acting break five years ago seems like a superficial gesture, Mara is equally quick to downplay the importance of such accolades. It's not that she isn't grateful, more that she measures success differently. "Any time you receive an award is a huge honour," she says. "But even the award in Cannes, which was something I did not expect at all, I probably felt really good about myself for about a day and then the next day I was back to being me, with the same goals and same hang-ups. Awards are great, but they don't make me feel like suddenly I've arrived."

From speaking to Mara it's clear that the mantelpiece of her Los Angeles home doesn't represent the limit of her ambitions, but when LWLies enquires about her career aspirations she makes no attempt to hide her insecurities. "I still feel like I have so much left to do and so many more mistakes to make and so much more to prove," she says, rushing her words. "I always feel like I'm just trying to not fuck up. I'm terrified of being bad. Every movie I finish I think, 'Shit, now I know how to do it better.' That's kind of what keeps me going." Perhaps what's most surprising about hearing Mara speak with this level of humility is how genuine it feels. Excessive modesty can seem false and insincere when expressed by someone whose talent and charm is as undeniable as her's, yet if anything this candid admission serves as a reminder of how far Mara's star has risen in such a short space of time.

In past interviews Mara has described acting as an education, a continuous process of experiential learning in



which personal development and professional compatibility are intrinsically linked. This was never more true than on Carol. "I learned so much working on this film," she tells LWLies. "Just observing Cate and how she works... I don't want to get too fangirly here, but I was in awe a lot of the time around her." And Todd? "Every filmmaker I've worked with has been so different to the next, and I've learned something different from all of them, but Todd... he's just incredible. He's so well prepared and pays so much attention to every detail. You know sometimes you watch movies and it feels like the actors are all in a different movie? With Todd, he makes it so clear what movie you're going to be in and the space you're going to be in. At the end of the day, as

an actor you're ultimately at the mercy of the director. I felt very safe in Todd's world."

When asked about her own process, Mara baulks. "I don't have a process. I mean, I like to do a lot of research and reading for each part, but I find that stuff so boring to talk about. Like, who wants to hear about that, really?" It's a perfectly fair shutdown, but at this point you begin to wonder to what extent Mara has earned her reputation for being coy and guarded in interviews. Then, with her very next breath, she derails that train of thought. "I find it very hard to be vulnerable, even in front of the people that I love. With Todd, he made it very easy. Therese is a very vulnerable character and Todd created a space where I felt comfortable showing that side of myself, which is something I'd never normally

feel. You wanted to do that for him." So what is it precisely about Haynes' approach to storytelling that resonated with Mara? "He just understands women," she explains. "I don't understand it - he's just so brilliant at telling female stories. Because he loves and respects women so much it created a safe environment for us to tell a really intimate and delicate story. It would have been a very different experience with someone who isn't as sensitive and in-tune as Todd."

It's fascinating that Mara is so keen to discuss Haynes' method above her own, not least because self-aggrandising conversations about "the craft" are so common when engaging with Hollywood's elite, but mostly because it's rare to meet such an unaffected young actor, someone who recognises the need to adapt to a given director's process. This understanding is part of what makes Mara a great actor, and presumably it's been a factor in her finding favour with the likes of David Fincher, Steven Soderbergh and Terrence Malick, whose as yet untitled 2016 project is currently in post production. Like a lot of actors, Mara is her own worst critic and a stickler for detail, but because so much of what she does is instinctual she doesn't see the benefit in retrospectively obsessing over her work. (As Jesse Eisenberg says to Mara in The Social Network, "There's a difference between being obsessed and being motivated.") "I always watch myself back at least once," she reveals, "but usually just out of respect for the filmmaker. Before the Cannes premiere [of Carol], Todd had been trying to get me to watch the film for six months and I kept putting it

> off. It's one of those things where you end up noticing all the little flaws and mistakes that probably no one else notices but seem huge to me. It's like, I have a teenytiny snaggletooth that sticks out a little bit, which to me is a flaw. But there's always two ways of looking at things, and so I've learned to acknowledge the fact that it also gives my face character. Now I love my little snaggletooth."

> You won't see Mara play the ingénue or the innocent narrator, or any outmoded female archetype for that matter. She simply has no interest in playing those types of characters. Yet while Mara has undoubtedly come a long way in the last five years, the same can't quite be said of the industry. It's a problem she's acutely aware of. "When I was starting out it was really frustrating because it felt like all the parts out there were

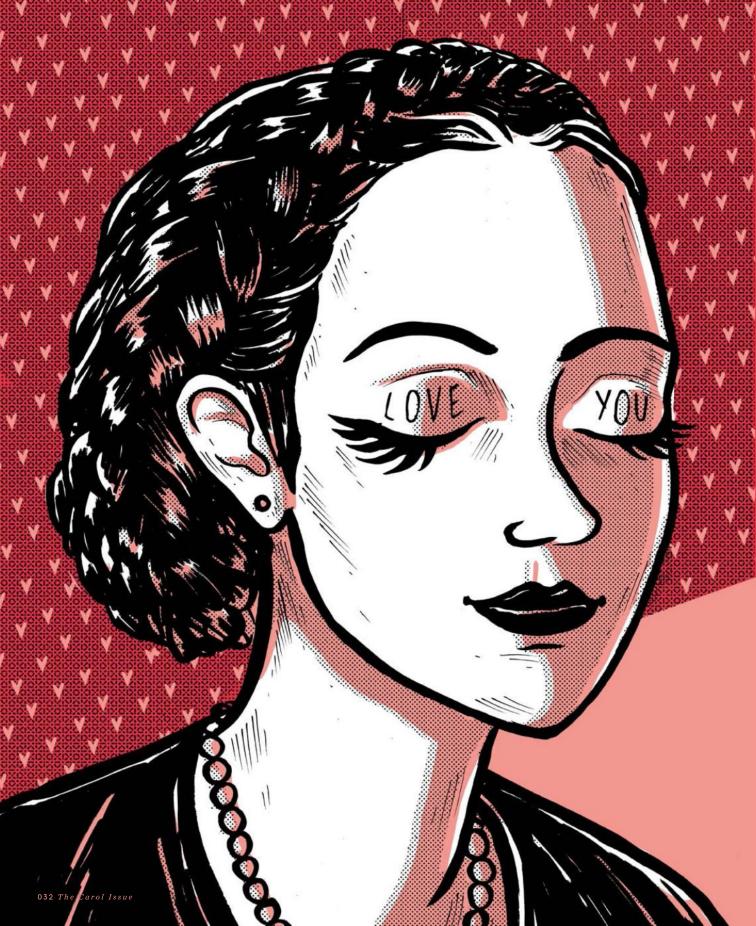
'the girlfriend' or whatever. There was no real person behind most of those characters. In the last five years that's changed and I've had the opportunity to play a range of well-realised characters. But a lot of the time it feels like I'm reading the best female dialogue out there. There have been years where there's been nothing that's interested me. You get scripts through and the dialogue is just horrible. It's so weird. People just don't know how to write female dialogue. So many men are afraid of writing female dialogue. We're not that different, you know, we're all human. But it's changing. There are a lot more female writers and I sincerely hope that there will be a lot more female directors in the future as well. The fact that we're even having this conversation, that's a start."

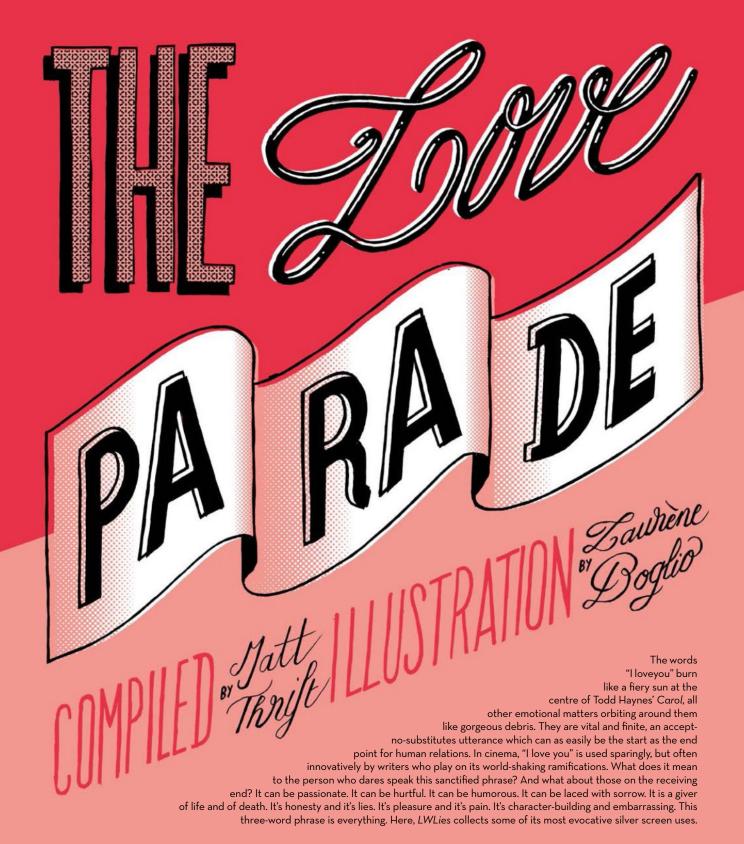


"I DON'T HAVE A PROCESS. I MEAN, I LIKE TO DO A LOT OF RESEARCH AND READING FOR EACH PART, BUT I FIND THAT STUFF SO BORING TO TALK ABOUT. LIKE, WHO WANTS TO **HEAR ABOUT** THAT, REALLY?"









My Darling Clementine

CLEMENTINE: Please, John. You can't send me away like this. You can't run away from me any more than you can run away from yourself. Now I know why you don't care whether you live or die, why you tried to get yourself killed. Well, I've heard all about you, John and you're wrong, so wrong. You have no right to destroy yourself. You have a world of friends back home who love you, John. And I love you.



Annie Hall

ALVY:

Love is too weak a word for what I feel - I luuurve you, you know, I loave you, I luff you, two F's, yes I have to invent, of course - I do, don't you think I do?"

TIGED.

Permit me to introduce myself. I am Tanaka. Please, call me Tiger. BOND:

If you're Tanaka, then how do you feel about me?



TIGER:

[the code response] I... love you.

BOND:

Well, I'm glad we got that out of the way.

VIOLET

I love you once,
I love you twice,
I love you more
I love you more
than red beams
and rice!

PRETTY BABY, 1978.

THE RETURN OF

13.83

THE LIVING DEAD

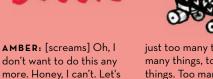
FREDDY: Gee, and now you've made me hurt myself again! You made me break my hand completely off this time, Tina! But I don't care darling, because I love you, and you've got to let me EAT YOUR BRAAAAAAAAAIIIIIINS!

BOOGIE

just? Let's have fun now!

because it's over. There's

Let's just go and go and go,



just too many things, too many things, too many things. Too many things. ROLLERGIRL: Okay.

AMBER: Let's go walk.

[sniffs]

NIGHTS

1997

ROLLERGIRL: I don't want to leave this room. AMBER: [laughs] Me, either! I love you, honey! ROLLERGIRL: I love you, mom!

GONE WITH THE WIND

RHETT: There's one thing that I do know, and that's that I love you, Scarlett. In spite of you and me, and the whole silly world going to pieces around us, I love you. Because we're alike, bad lots both of us. Selfish and shrew, but able to look things in the eye as we call them by their right names.

A place in the Sun. 151

GEORGE: I'm the happiest person in the world.

ANGELA: The second happiest.

GEORGE: Oh, Angela, if I could only tell you how much I love you, if I could only tell you all.

ANGELA: Tell mama. Tell mama all.

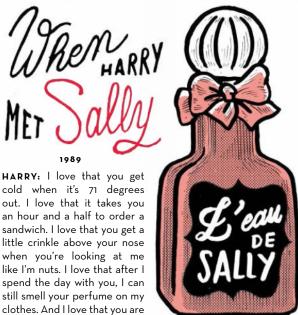


GABRIEL OAK TO BATHSHEBA EVERDENE IN FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD (1967)

"I LOVE YOU MORE THAN COMMON."

JESSICA RABBIT

"ROGER, darling. I WANT YOU TO KNOW I LOVE YOU. I've loved you more than any woman ever loved a nabet! WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT (1988)



the last person I want to talk

to before I go to sleep at night. And it's not because I'm lonely, and it's not because it's New Year's Eve. I came here tonight because when you realise you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as

SALLY: You see? That is just like you, Harry. You say things like that, and you make it impossible for me to hate you.

SHORT ROUND INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM - 1984

"Indy, I love you. Wake up, Indy! You're my lest



RONNY: Loretta, I love you. Not like they told you love is, and I didn't know this either, but love don't make things nice, it ruins everything. It breaks your heart. It makes things a mess. We aren't here to make things perfect. The snowflakes are perfect. The stars are perfect. Not us. Not us! We are here to ruin ourselves and to break our hearts and love the wrong people and die. The storybooks are bullshit. Now I want you to come upstairs with me and get in my bed.

CAMILLE:

You like all of me? My mouth? My eyes? My nose? And my ears? PAUL: Yes, all of you. CAMILLE: Then you love me... totally? PAUL: Yes. Totally... tenderly... tragically.



CATHERINE JULES ET JIM, 1962

1972

FREDO:

Mike...

You do not come to Las Vegas and talk to a man like Moe Greene like that!

MICHAEL:

Fredo, you're my older brother, and I love you. But don't ever take sides with anyone against the Family again. Ever.



LA MAMAN ET LA PUTAIN - 1973 -

VERONIKA: I followed you because I wanted to be with you. You know what? I'd like to fuck you again. I love you and I want to fuck you again.

Robin and Marian

MARIAN: I love you. More than all you know. I love you more than children. More than fields I've planted with my hands. I love you more than morning prayers or peace or food to eat. I love you more than sunlight, more than flesh or joy, or one more day. I love you... more than God.

Thank you. I love you
I knew it the minute
I met you. I'm sorry
it took so long for me
to catch up.
I just got stuck.

PAT - SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK, 2012



PABLO: It's not your fault if you don't love me and it's not my fault if I love you.

KATERINE TO ALEXANDER

- Tell Fle. I want to hear you say it. - ALRIGHT I love you.

JOURNEY TO ITALY, 1954.

FLASH, FLASH, FLASH, I LOVE YOU, BUT WE ONLY HAVE 14 HOURS TO SAVE THE EARTH!

FROM AN Ytefan My Love

WOMAN - 1948

LISA: Now I'm alone. My head throbs and my temples are burning. Perhaps God has been kind, and I too have caught the fever. If this letter reaches you, believe this - that I love you now as I've always loved you. My life can be measured by the moments I've had with you and our child. If only you could have shared those moments, if only you could have recognised what was always yours, could have found what was never lost. If only...



HE: I love you.
SHE: You don't.
HE: I do.

SHE: I don't believe you. I don't BELIEVE you! I DON'T FUCKING BELIEVE YOU!



TERRY: Garth told me about the show, man. I love you, man.

WAYNE: Yeah, and I love you too, Terry. **TERRY:** No-no-no, I mean it, man. I LOVE you.

WAYNE: No, I-I mean it. I love you.

TERRY: No you don't, man. I love you.

WAYNE: [Terry hugs Wayne] Garth.

Hey, come over here, I think Terry has something he wants to say to you.

TERRY: I love you, man.

GARTH: ...Thank you.



HOLLY: So what.

PAUL: So what? So plenty! I love you, you belong to me!

HOLLY: [tearfully] No. People don't belong to people.

PAUL: Of course they do!

HOLLY: I'll never let ANYBODY put me in a cage.

PAUL: I don't want to put you in a cage, I want to love you!

ADAM'S RIB - 1949-

KIP: Mrs Bonner, I love you. I love lots of girls and ladies and women, and so on, but you're the only one I know why I love. And do you know why? Because you live right across the hall from me. You're mighty attractive in every single way, Mrs Bonner, but I'd probably love anyone who lived right across the hall from me. It's so convenient. Is there anything worse than that awful taking a girl home and that long trek back alone? Want to trade kisses? That's equal.



[Annie places a block of wood between Paul's ankles.]

PAUL: Annie, whatever you're thinking about doing, please don't do it.

ANNIE: Darling, please trust me, it's for the best.

[She lifts the sledgehammer and swings.] **PAUL:** Annie, please...

[His left ankle snaps against the wood. He screams.]

ANNIE: Almost done! Just one more. [She swings again, shattering his right ankle with the sledgehammer.]

ANNIE: God, I love you. [Paul passes out.]

NATURAL BORN KILLERS, 1994.

MICKEY: I love you, Mal.

MALLORY: I know you do baby, and I've loved
you since the day we met.



Brief Encounter

ALEC: I love you. I love your wide eyes, the way you smile, your shyness, and the way you laugh at my jokes.

LAURA: Please don't...

ALEC: I love you. I love you. You love me too. It's no use pretending it hasn't happened cause it has.

LAURA: Yes it has. I don't want to pretend anything either to you or to anyone else. But from now on, I shall have to. That's what's wrong. Don't you see? That's what spoils everything. That's why we must stop, here and now, talking like this. We're neither of us free to love each other. There's too much in the way. There's still time, if we control ourselves and behave like sensible human beings. There's still time.



LITTLE MARY:

Is this the ear you can't hear on?
[whispering in his bad ear]
LITTLE MARY: George Bailey,
I'll love you 'til the day I die.



THE FARMER: I think I love you. ABBY: What a nice thing to say.

The Maltere Falcon

SAM SPADE: All we've got is that maybe you love me and maybe I love you.

BRIGID: You know whether you love me

SAM SPADE: Maybe I do. I'll have some rotten nights after I've sent you over, but that'll pass.

Ze Notti Bianche

MARIO: Come on, Natalia. Listen to me, I have to talk to you... Listen, I... I love you, Natalia! I love you!

NATALIA: Go away! He won't come if you're here. Go away!

MARIO: He's not coming at all! Don't you see? Forget your ghosts from the past! What counts is that you and I...

NATALIA: Go away!

ANTONINUS: I love you Spartacus, as I love my own father



SPARTACUS:

I love you, like my son I'll never see Go & sleep

ILSA: I love you so much. And I hate this war so much. Oh, it's a crazy world. Anything can happen. If you shouldn't get away, I mean, if something should keep us apart, wherever they put you and wherever I'll be, I want you to know that.



EYES WIDE SHUT

ALICE HARFORD:

Hove you and you know there is something very important we need to do as soon as possible. DR BILL HARFORD: What's that? ALICE HARFORD: Fuck.

INDECENT PROPOSAL



NINA: I love you. JAMIE: I love you.

NINA: I really love you.

JAMIE: I really, truly love you.

NINA: I really, truly, madly love you. JAMIE: I really, truly, madly, deeply

love you.

NINA: I really, truly, madly, deeply, passionately love you.

JAMIE: I really, truly, madly, deeply, passionately, remarkably love you.

NINA: I really, truly, madly, deeply, passionately, remarkably, uhmm...

deliciously love you.

JAMIE: I really, truly, madly, passionately, remarkably, deliciously... juicily love you... NINA: Deeply! Deeply! You passed on deeply, which was your word, which means that you couldn't possibly have meant it! So you're a fraud, that's it! [they hug] You're probably a figment of my imagination. [pause] Juicily?



[The record spins, Pinkie's voice sounds from beyond the grave]

PINKIE [ON RECORD]: You wanted a recording of my voice, well here it is. What you want me to say is 'I love you'... [the record, scratched when he tried to destroy it, keeps skipping, repeating over and over] I love you... I love you... I love you... I love you...



1994

HONEYBUNNY: I love you, Pumpkin. PUMPKIN: I love you, Honeybunny. HONEYBUNNY: Everybody be cool,

this is a robbery.

PUMPKIN: Any of you fucking pricks move and I'll execute every motherfucking last one of you.

KYLE REESE: John Connor gave me a picture of you once. I didn't know why at the time. It was very old - torn, faded. You were young like you are now. You seemed just a little sad. I used to always wonder what you were thinking at that moment. I memorised every line, every curve... I came across time for you, Sarah. I love you; I always have.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK



I love you.

I Amour

THE KIDS ARE ALLRIGHT

- 2010.

NIC: Look, we have to be smart about this. You know, if we act like grubby bitches, we're just gonna make it worse.

JULES: I know.

NIC: Let's just kill him with kindness and put it to bed.

JULES: I'm with you, honey. We're gonna

get through this, okay?
NIC: I love you, chicken.
JULES: I love you, too, pony.



PETER: [over radio] Where were you born?

JUNE: Boston. PETER: Mass.?

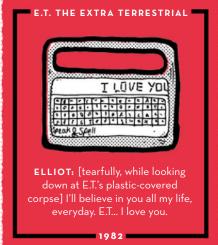
JUNE: Yes.
PETER: That's a place to be born, history
was made there. Are you in love with

anybody? No, no don't answer that.

JUNE: I could love a man like you, Peter.

PETER: I love you, June. You're life and

I'm leaving you.



ghost - 1990

Sam: I LOVE YOU, MOLLY. I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU, Molly: Ditto.



ROCKY: Adrian! Adrian! ADRIAN: Rocky!

ROCKY: Adrian!
ADRIAN:
Rocky!

ROCKY: Hey, where's your hat?

ADRIAN: I love you!

ROCKY: I love you. ADRIAN:

[grabs and hugs Rocky] I love you! ROCKY:

[out of breath] I love you. I love you.

ADRIAN: I love you! ROCKY:

I love you.

ADRIAN: I love you! Love Actually

JAMIE: I'm so late.

JAMIE'S GIRLFRIEND: It's just 'round the corner, you'll make it. JAMIE: Are you sure you don't mind me going without you? JAMIE'S GIRLFRIEND:

No, really, I'm just feeling so rotten.

JAMIE: Hove you.

JAMIE'S GIRLFRIEND: I know.

JAMIE: I love you even when you're sick and look disgusting.

JAMIE'S GIRLFRIEND: I know. Now go or you will actually miss it.

JAMIE: Right. Did I mention that I love you?

JAMÍE'S GIRLFRIEND:

Yes, you did. Get out, loser!



DAN: Why are you trying to hurt me?

ALEX: I'm not trying to
hurt you Dan, I love you!

DAN: You what?

ALEX: I love you!

DAN: You don't even know me.

ALEX: How can you say that?!



RITA: It's beautiful. I don't know what to say.

PHIL: I do. Whatever happens tomorrow, or for the rest of my life, I'm happy now... because I love you.



"A PURE, BUBBLY JOY"

Little White Lies

Time Out

"A WILD, DEMENTED CINEPHILIAC FEAST"

XXXXX

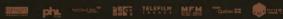
"AN EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER"

FORBIDDEN

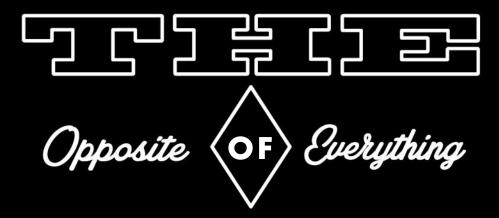
a film by GUY MADDIN and EVAN JOHNSON

ROY DUPUIS - CHARLOTTE RAMPLING - MATHIEU AMALRIC - AMIRA CASAR - LOUIS NEGIN CLARA FUREY · GERALDINE CHAPLIN · ARIANE LABED and UDO KIER

AS PRINCIAN DE PRINCIAN DE METANDAL EM DEPOD E CAMOR PRINCIPA DE REPORTADO DE ELEMA CAMORA MANTIDER EMA ANDICE, HAN ANDICE, DE SCEDE AND ACCUSADA HON PER CHIEFE EN EPER SENDANCE PRIME FORD MANDIO AR PERE COLDIDAR, ESTRE SENDAN DE CONTRA DE MANDIO ANDICE DE MANDIO ANDICE MANDIO SENDAN DE SONO ANDICE SENDAN SENDAN DE CONTRA DE



IN SELECT CINEMAS DECEMBER 11



FINDING A DEFINITION FOR QUEER CINEMA -

e cannot give a definition of Queer Cinema locked inside a single format or language - it cuts across fiction and documentary, animation and experimental film. Were we to consider framing it as an isolated genre, with its own formal and narrative characteristics, we would also largely fail - Queer Cinema spans melodrama, comedy, neo-noir, and even westerns. And what about narrative? If that were so, we would succumb to the canonical and overused explanation that Queer Cinema is any film whose main storyline represents LGBT characters. More: these characters are supposed to be represented in a "positive" manner. This definition of "Queer Cinema" tied to narrative might have been useful in the process of disengaging from a long history of distorted images of queer characters in film history, and in the affirmation of a community. Nowadays it sounds extremely narrow in the legitimisation of Queer Cinema as a genre.

The 1980s was a highly politicised decade, in which a clear attempt was made to project a "positive" image of LGBT individuals to mainstream audiences, while at the same time looking for stories and characters for homosexual audiences to identify with. Most of these films were set against an urban, white and affluent background - a clear ploy to reach a more mainstream audience. In terms of their representation, characters were largely devoid of sexual desire, and aspired to a heteronormative family life. However, the most relevant aspect - against which reaction was swift - was the construction of the gay character as "victim". Not only of the AIDS epidemics, but also of their surrounding social and political system, there was a return to the representation of gay characters imposed by the Hays code. These films were defined as "LGBT Cinema".

While this "victimisation" model developed in the '80s, a number of filmmakers were already seeking alternative models. In 1985, Gus Van Sant's first feature Mala Noche pointed towards what was to come. Queer Cinema would only find its new shape in 1991, however, with the appearance of Van Sant's My Own Private Idaho and Todd Haynes' Poison. The '90s saw the emergence of new film aesthetics and narrative styles, all of which suggest new negotiations of subjectivities connected to sexual and gender identities, labelled as "New Queer Cinema" (NQC).

The subversive logic of the NQC makers however did not simply break with the "victimisation" model of the LGBT Cinema of the '80s. On the one hand, NQC once again placed the sexual charge and desire of its characters and their bodies on screen, also harking back to the aesthetics of experimental cinema and gay pornography of the '60s and '70s. On the other - and this is especially symbolically relevant - the makers of NQC revived the models of gay and lesbian representation under the Hays code. That is, these characters and these bodies, who desire and are the objects of desire, are not necessarily nice guys, they don't just do good, they do not seek recognition and integration in mainstream society, and are not particularly interested in repeating heteronormative models. Queer characters are no more, no less than any other character. Queer Cinema is an expression of freedom.

Subverting and queering a seminal quote by Susan Sontag (who happened to be the first essayist to define "camp", back in 1964): "queer" is the opposite of everything.

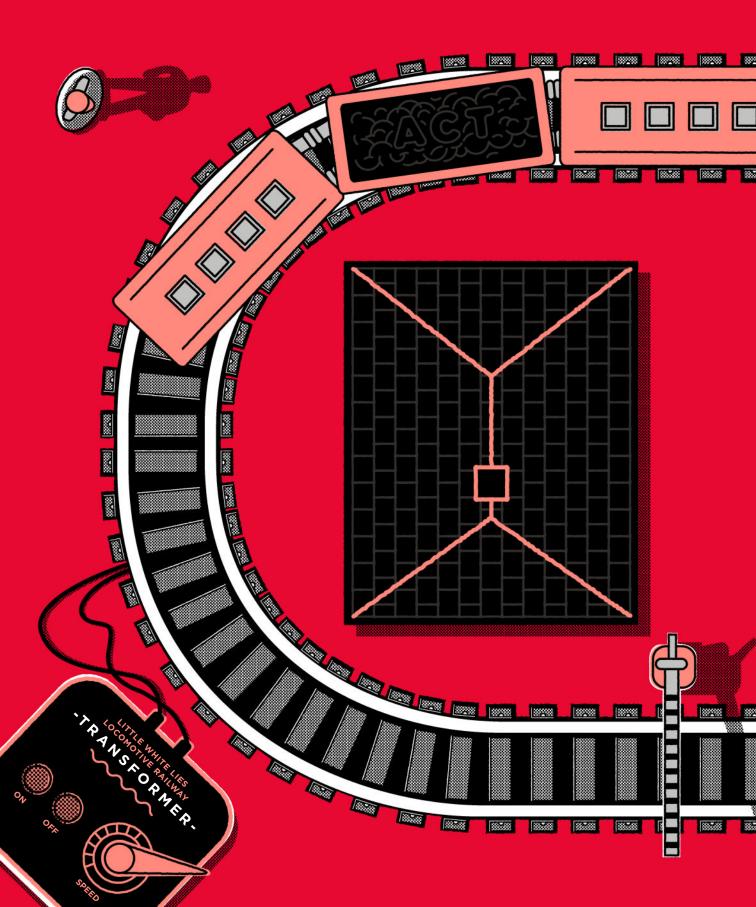
João Ferreira is Artistic Director Queer Lisboa Film Festival.

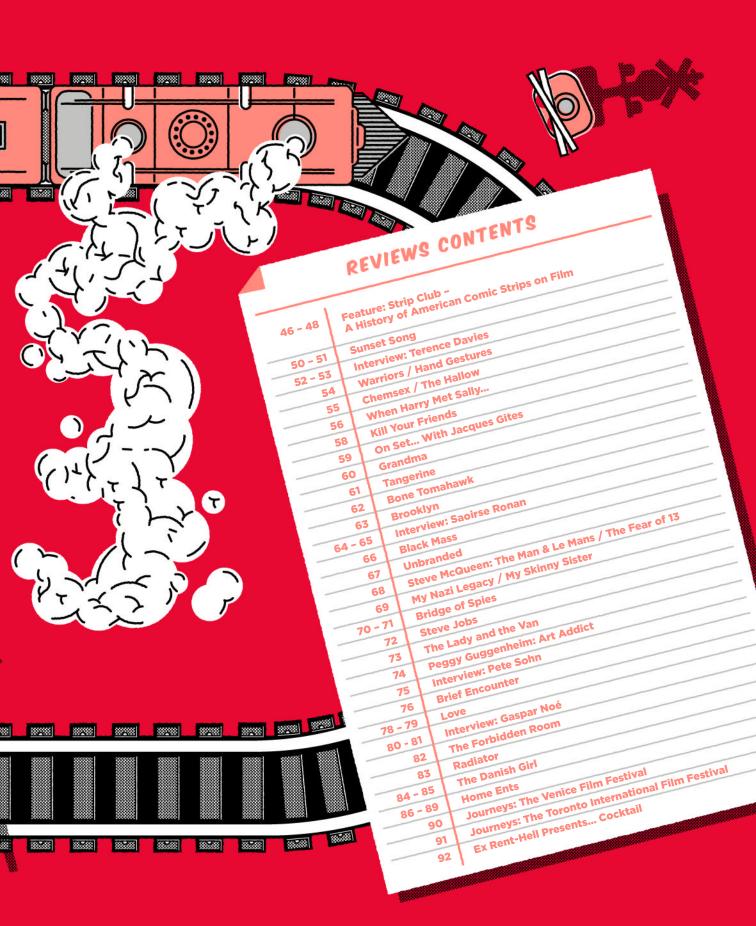


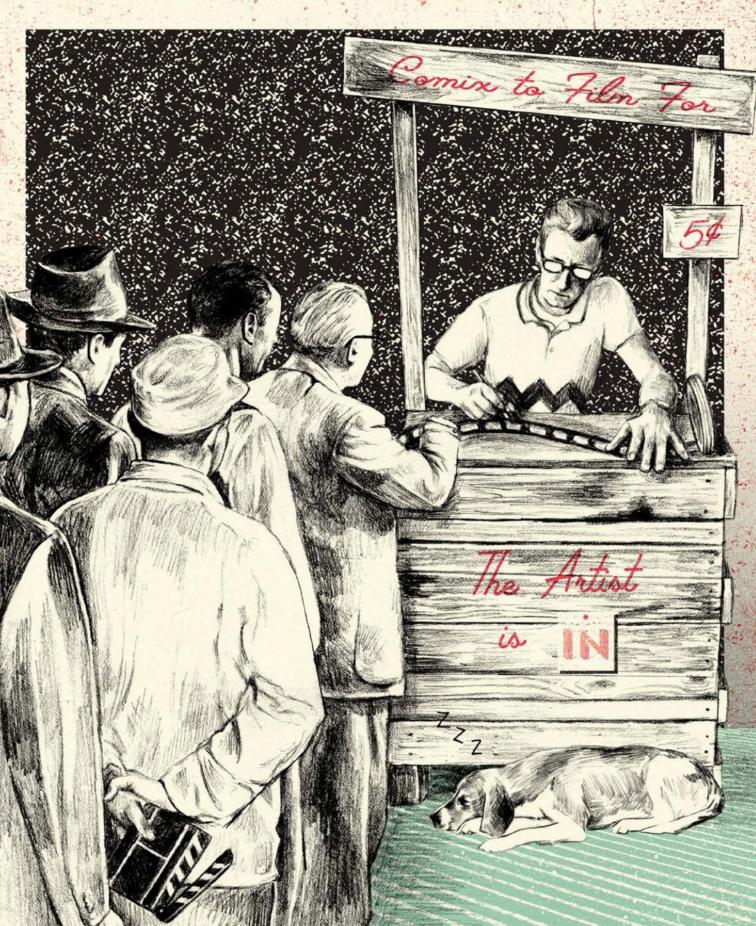
Great QUEER FILMS

1. THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA,		25. DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS
QUEEN OF THE DESERT (Stephan Elliott, 1994)		(Richard Oswald, 1919)
2. ALL ABOUT EVE (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950)	- 7	26. EAST PALACE WEST PALACE (Zhang Yuan, 1996)
3. ANOTHER WAY (Károly Makk, 1982)		27. FAR FROM HEAVEN (Todd Haynes, 2002)
4. AMAZING GRACE (Amos Guttman, 1992)		28. FASTER, PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!
5. BEAUTIFUL THING (Hettie Macdonald, 1996)		(Russ Meyer, 1965)
6. BEFORE STONEWALL		29. FIREWORKS (Kenneth Anger, 1947)
(Greta Schiller and Robert Rosenberg, 1984)		30. FLAMING CREATURES (Jack Smith, 1963)
7. BEN-HUR (William Wyler, 1959)		31. FLESH (Paul Morrissey, 1968)
8. A BIGGER SPLASH, A (Jack Hazan, 1973)		32. FOX AND HIS FRIENDS (Rainer Werner
9. THE BLOSSOMING OF MAXIMO OLIVEROS	Fas	ssbinder, 1975)
(Auraeus Solito, 2005)		33. GENDERNAUTS: A JOURNEY
10. BLUE (Derek Jarman, 1993)		THROUGH SHIFTING IDENTITIES (Monika Treut, 1999)
11. THE BLUE ANGEL (Josef von Sternberg, 1930)		34. GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES
12. BORN IN FLAMES (Lizzie Borden, 1983)		(Howard Hawks, 1953)
13. THE BOYS IN THE BAND (William Friedkin, 1970)		35. GILDA (Charles Vidor, 1946)
14. BOYS IN THE SAND (Wakefield Poole, 1971)		36. GLEN OR GLENDA (Edward D Wood Jr, 1953)
15. THE BRANDON TEENA STORY		37. GO FISH (Rose Troche, 1994)
(Susan Muska and Gréta Olafsdóttir, 1998)		38. HEAVENLY CREATURES (Peter Jackson, 1994)
16. THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN		39. HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH
(James Whale, 1935)		(John Cameron Mitchell, 2001)
17. BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN (Ang Lee, 2005)		40. HIDDEN PLEASURES (Eloy de la Iglesia, 1977)
18. CABARET (Bob Fosse, 1972)		41. IT IS NOT THE HOMOSEXUAL WHO IS
19. CALAMITY JANE (David Butler, 1953)		PERVERSE, BUT THE SOCIETY IN WHICH HE LIVES
20. THE CELLULOID CLOSET		(Rosa von Praunheim, 1971)
(Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, 1995)		42. ITTY BITTY TITTY COMMITTEE
21. THE CHILDREN'S HOUR (William Wyler, 1961)		(Jamie Babbit, 2007)
22. DAKAN (Mohamed Camara, 1997)		43. THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE
23. THE DAMNED (Luchino Visconti, 1969)	(Ro	bert Aldrich, 1968)
24. THE DEAD GIRL'S FEAST (Matheus Nachtergaele, 2008)		44. LA PLAYS ITSELF (Fred Halsted, 1972)

45. LAURENCE ANYWAYS (Xavier Dolan, 2012)	75. SERBIS (Brillante Mendoza, 2008)
46. LAW OF DESIRE (Pedro Almodóvar, 1987)	76. SET ME FREE (Léa Pool, 1999)
47. LES BICHES (Claude Chabrol, 1968)	77. SHOW ME LOVE (Lukas Moodysson, 1998)
48. LES DIABOLIQUES (Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1955)	78. SILVERLAKE LIFE: THE VIEW FROM HERE
49. THE LIVING END (Gregg Araki, 1992)	(Tom Joslin and Peter Friedman, 1993)
50. LOOKING FOR LANGSTON (Isaac Julien, 1989)	79. A SONG OF LOVE (Jean Genet, 1950)
51. MADAME SATÃ (Karim Ainöuz, 2002)	80. STRAWBERRY AND CHOCOLATE
52. MÄDCHEN IN UNIFORM	(Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío, 1993)
(Leontine Sagan and Carl Froelich, 1931)	81. SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY (John Schlesinger, 1971)
53. MAN OF ASHES (Nouri Bouzid, 1986)	82. SUNSET BLVD (Billy Wilder, 1950)
54. MERCEDES (Yousry Nasrallah, 1993)	83. SWOON (Tom Kalin, 1992)
55. MIKAËL (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1924)	84. SYLVIA SCARLETT (George Cukor, 1935)
56. MOROCCO (Josef von Sternberg, 1930)	85. TARNATION (Jonathan Caouette, 2003)
57. MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (Stephen Frears, 1985)	86. TAXI TO THE TOILET (Frank Ripploh, 1980)
58. MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO (Gus Van Sant, 1991)	87. THEOREM (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1968)
59. NIGHTHAWKS (Ron Peck, 1978)	88. THOSE WHO LOVE ME CAN TAKE THE TRAIN
60. NO SKIN OFF MY ASS (Bruce LaBruce, 1991)	(Patrice Chéreau, 1998)
61. PARIS IS BURNING (Jennie Livingston, 1990)	89. THE TIMES OF HARVEY MILK (Rob Epstein, 1984)
63. PHILADELPHIA (Jonathan Demme, 1993)	90. TONGUES UNTIED (Marlon Riggs, 1989)
64. PINK NARCISSUS (James Bidgood, 1971)	91. TORCH SONG TRILOGY (Paul Bogart, 1988)
65. PIXOTE (Hector Babenco, 1981)	92. TOUKI BOUKI: THE JOURNEY OF THE HYENA
66. QUEEN CHRISTINA (Rouben Mamoulian, 1933)	(Djibril Diop Mambéty, 1973)
67. RAGING SUN, RAGING SKY (Julián Hernández, 2009)	93. TROPICAL MALADY
68. REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (Nicholas Ray, 1955)	(Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2004)
69. RED RIVER (Howard Hawks, 1948)	94. VICTIM (Basil Dearden, 1961)
70. THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW	95. THE WATERMELON WOMAN (Cheryl Dunye, 1996)
(Jim Sharman, 1975)	96. WEEKEND (Andrew Haigh, 2011)
71. ROPE (Alfred Hitchcock, 1948)	97. WILD REEDS (André Téchiné, 1994)
72. THE ROSE KING (Werner Schroeter, 1986)	98. WINTER KEPT US WARM (David Secter, 1965)
73. SAVAGE NIGHT s (Cyril Collard, 1992)	99. THE WIZARD OF OZ (Victor Fleming, 1939)
74. SEBASTIANE (Derek Jarman, 1976)	100. ZERO PATIENCE (John Greyson, 1993)







Words by NICK PINKERTON Illustration by JENNIFER DIONISIO

Strip Club

A new movie inspired by Charles M Schultz' 'Peanuts' prompts *LWLies* to look back at the history of movies inspired by newspaper comic strips.

few years before the Death of Cinema discussion reached a deafening din, there was the Death of the Comic Strip. Rather than competition from the small screen, the issue was disappearing page real-estate, stuffing more and smaller panels into an ever-contracting layout to service an ever-shrinking audience. Perhaps the medium's most eloquent eulogist was also one of its last universally-esteemed artists, Bill Watterson, the creator of 'Calvin and Hobbes', who declared his cause lost and retired, his final strip running on New Year's Eve, 1995. In March that same year, Berkeley Breathed, who'd also bemoaned the slow smothering of the "funny pages", began the first of what would be a series of retirements, wrapping up his Sunday strip, 'Outland', a sequel of sorts to his remarkable 'Bloom County', which first appeared in 1980. Even Gary Larson, whose single-panel 'The Far Side' seemed best equipped to survive the Great Shrinkage, closed up shop on New Year's Day, '95. Over the course of a single year, the brightest lights of a generation of American newspaper cartoonists went dark.

"It's just a page of inky blur that only a 10-year-old's eyes could focus upon," Breathed told an interviewer in 2001 of the state of the art. "It's the buggy whips of this millennium: quaint and eclipsed." It hadn't always been so. Once, said Breathed, "comic heroes were America's first celebrities, known coast to coast."

The comic strip and the motion picture, in their modern forms, are roughly contemporaries, two emissaries of a new mass media visual culture born at the dawn of the 20th century which, through a process of creative cross-fertilisation, together drafted and refined a vocabulary for graphic storytelling. The Yellow Kid, generally considered the first breakout comic star, first appeared in Richard F Outcault's 'Hogan's Alley' on 17 February, 1895 – the year usually given as the birthday of motion pictures for the lack of any more viable candidate. (The status afforded the Yellow Kid reflects a tendency to view comic strips as a Yankee invention, though England's "Ally" Sloper appeared in the pages of 'Judy' as early as 1867 – and first appeared in a live-action film in 1898.)

Outcault's initial outlet was Joseph Pulitzer's 'New York World', though the Yellow Kid character proved so popular that William Randolph Hearst's 'New York Journal' hired he and the Kid, shortly before that paper began, in 1897, to run Rudolph Dirks and Harold H Knerr's 'Katzenjammer Kids'. That same year the Lubin Film Company of Philadelphia released a cash-in short titled *Yellow Kid*, with the American Mutoscope Company's *The Katzenjammer Kids in School* from 1898 arriving hot on its heels. Meanwhile, out west, a young artist who was honing his draftsmanship at the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, Windsor McCay, saw a demonstration

of Thomas A Edison's Vitascope at a dime museum on Vine Street. Soon he would be headed off to join the staff at James Gordon Bennett, Jr's 'New York Herald', where his work would briefly appear alongside Outcault's new strip, 'Buster Brown', and where he would continue to dream of the new possibilities afforded by Edison's invention.

In the early years of the movies, when framing still largely followed the model of the theatrical proscenium arch, comic artists were experimenting with the panoply of "cinematic" techniques in strips that now appear as forerunners to the storyboard. Initially, however, the newspapers were tapped for content, for characters and scenarios with proven appeal. Early film pioneer Edwin S Porter, of *The Great Train Robbery* fame, directed Buster Brown shorts for the Edison Manufacturing Company, as well as a 1906 film from McCay's 'Dreams of a Rarebit Fiend' series, which depicted tempestuous nightmares brought on by the consumption of Welsh rarebit before bed.

Best known as the creator of the 'Little Nemo in Slumberland' strip, McCay's illustrations of dream states would lead some to label him a proto-surrealist – a gag from 'Rarebit Fiend' recurs in Luis Buñuel's 1930 short, *L'Age d'Or* – although his legacy in motion pictures is tied up with his role as a pioneer of film animation. Inspired by his son Robert's flip books, McCay self-financed 10 animated shorts between 1911 and 1921, including 1911's *Little Nemo* and 1913's *Gertie the Dinosaur*, both of which he incorporated as interactive elements of his vaudeville act, before Hearst buffaloed him away from flights of fancy and into editorial work.

Soon it became *de rigueur* for characters to shuttle between screen and printed page, with Hearst and his King Features Syndicate leading the way in multimedia brand synergy. George Herriman's 'Krazy Kat' got the animated treatment in 1916, as did Bud Fisher's 'Mutt and Jeff'. (Also, beginning in 1911, the basis for a series of one-reelers from David Horsley's 'Nestor Comedies'.) Felix the Cat, who first appeared in a series of animated shorts around 1919, got his own strip for King in 1923. EC Segar added a sailor with ballooned forceps to the cast of his Thimble Theatre in 1929, and four years later Max and Dave Fleischer's Fleischer Studios produced the first Popeye the Sailor Man shorts. In his 'Minute Movies' strip, cartoonist Ed Wheelan, using a recurring company of invented matinee idols, illustrated the movies in his own mind.

Cartoons became comic strips, comic strips became animated shorts, and strips became live-action films. The 1920's brought stripto-live-action crossover acts including 1926's *Ella Cinders, Bringing Up Father*, and *Harold Teen* (both from 1928), but the greatest dual-medium success of the era was undoubtedly *Blondie*, created in 1930 by



Chic Young and carried by King, which spun off a grand total of 28 films starring Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake as Blondie and Dagwood Bumstead. Those who wanted to see still more of the Bumsteads could turn to any number of "Tijuana Bibles", illicit underground comics which imagined prominent figures of the day as they engaged in (usually quite verbose) episodes of explicit conjugal bliss. Comic strip figures were popular subjects, as were stars of the silver screen – see for instance Laurel and Hardy in *Doing Things*, William Powell and Myrna Loy in *Nuts to Will Hays*, or Charlie McCarthy in *Using a Wooden One*.

Limiting ourselves to cases of adaptation, however, we will barely get at the paramount importance that comic strips had in shaping the imaginations of generations of filmmakers. A few examples: Georges Méliès, early in his career, was a political cartoonist. José Guadalupe Posada, a prolific printmaker who contributed to the penny press - the Mexican national equivalent to the comic pages at the turn of the last century - created an entire iconography for representing his native land, drawn on by Sergei Eisenstein in iQue viva México! and by the film artists of the coming Cine de Oro. (The conjoined history of Japanese cinema and manga probably deserves its own standalone piece.) Federico Fellini, a devotee of American strips like 'Happy Hooligan', eked out a paltry living in Florence as a teenager by selling sketches to the satirical weekly '420', and remained an inveterate doodler through his life. Sam Fuller also dabbled, illustrating his World War Two combat journals with drawings in the style of Billy DeBeck. (His brother, Ving, was the staff cartoonist at the lurid 'New York Evening Graphic' where Sam had been a teenaged crime reporter.) Between 1983 and 1992, polymath David Lynch contributed a strip called 'The Angriest Dog in the World' to the weekly 'LA Reader', always of the same four panels, three depicting the titular torpedo-shaped dog straining at its leash during the day, one the same scene at night, and the same ominous prologue: "...He cannot eat. He cannot sleep. He can just barely growl..."

Alternative weeklies like the 'Reader' were incubators for innovative new talents working in the strip format, including Mark Beyer and Matt Groening, though movie producers paid little heed to these developments. The Jazz Age boom of strip adaptations was never repeated, but Hollywood would continue to periodically test the public's collective nostalgia for the Golden Age of Cartooning, producing the box-office debacle of Robert Altman's live-action *Popeye* in 1980, John Huston's *Annie* in 1982 and *Dennis the Menace* in 1993, a bowdlerisation of Hank Ketcham's strip

which was part of a post-*Home Alone* bumper crop of movies starring awful children. These films appeared during the Indian summer of newspaper cartooning as a popular art, the era of Breathed, Larson, and Watterson none of whom had any impact on cinema, per se. Breathed and Larson tried television shorts, while Watterson was a cartooning-as-cartooning purist who refused to license out his creations – among the subjects discussed in Joel Allen Schroeder's 2013 documentary *Dear Mr Watterson*.

Charles "Sparky" Schultz, the dean of American cartooning from the mid-century onwards, never had any such compunctions about cross-promotion, lending his 'Peanuts' characters to a series of well-loved television specials produced in collaboration with Bill Melendez, beginning with 1965's A Charlie Brown Christmas. While the best and brightest Boomer talents abandoned ship, Schultz held on until 2000, when he essentially died at his drawing table, having turned out discursive, dottily-charming, and increasingly gag-free 'Peanuts' strips to the end of his days. With this, the field was ceded to hacks whose work had little to lose from formatting changes that devalued draftsmanship, as the smart phone and computer screen devalue mise-en-scène. After the great abdication, the rulers of the barren kingdom that the funnies had become were Scott Adams, with his postage-stamp-frame 'Dilbert', and the hackiest of them all, Jim Davis, whose endlessly repetitive 'Garfield' strips were an afterthought in his Paws, Inc merchandising juggernaut.

Of course, Davis would eventually get his paws into feature films with 2004's *Garfield: The Movie*, whose mixture of computer animation and human actors is representative of a 21st century cinema that has made firm designations like "live-action" and "animation" problematic. The film's Garfield, with his every orange-and-black hair articulated, epitomised a new difficulty in strip-to-screen translation – the CGI hyper-realism ruins the line, a cartoonist's signature and the source of whatever charm his creations have. (The less said of 2010's *Marmaduke*, the better.) Preliminary glimpses of Bly Sky Studios' forthcoming *The Peanuts Movie* suggest great pains have been taken to retain Schultz's style, though whether the film will embody what cartoonist Ivan Brunetti called Peanuts' "simple, beautiful, empathetic glimpse into the human condition" remains to be seen. Whatever the case, when tracing over the work of an Old Master, we're very far removed from the once-lively dialogue between strip and screen

The Peanuts Movie is released in the UK 21 December.

★★★★ "RIVETING, UNSENTIMENTAL...

a very strong piece of journalistic documentary"

Little White Lies

C H E M S E X

VICE PRESENT CHEMSEX

DIRECTED BY WILLIAM FAIRMAN MAX GOGARTY PRODUCED BY MAX GOGARTY WILLIAM FAIRMAN AL BROWN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS AL BROWN KEVIN SUTCLIFFE JACQUELINE EDENBROW CMPMATOGRAPHY BENJIE CROCE WILLIAM FAIRMAN MAX GOGARTY EDITED BY MARTA VELASQUEZ GRAHAM TAYLOR ORIGINAL SCORE BY DANIEL HARLE

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Official Selection BFI London Film Festival

In Cinemas Dec 4th. Curzon Soho (Q&A) Dec 1



Sunset Song

Directed by
TERENCE DAVIES
Starring
AGYNESS DEYN
PETER MULLAN
KEVIN GUTHRIE
Released
4 DECEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

A new film by Britain's greatest living director. Yes please.



ENJOYMENT.

An emotional bolt to the heart.



IN RETROSPECT.

Agyness Deyn's performance is one for the ages.

gyness Deyn is the star of Terence Davies' rhapsodic Sunset Song. As Chris Guthrie, she inhabits the soul of this beleaguered waif. It's a sensational performance: generous, tender and discreetly controlled. It's due to her ethereal presence that we are plausibly transported back to the rolling farmlands of early 20th century Scotland. She is Lilian Gish in The Wind or Way Down East, her captivating innocence made to stand firm while under heavy fire. As she weeps, we weep with her. As it should be.

The film sees her rebuffing the torments of daily life with nary a pout, while accepting good fortune with guarded cheer. Tears roll down her cheeks as a manifestation of her pain, her body lacking the resolve to hold them back. It's understandable considering all she goes through – lightly numbed to adversity and contentment both. Perhaps we could see her as a more melancholic and dainty version of Scarlett O'Hara – both characters cherish the land as a preserver of personal history. For them, a house is more than an ascetic domicile, it's a specimen jar filled with remembrances. For Chris, the landscape is an extension of her very being, a tangible memory bank which remains steadfast as family and friends are brought into the world and made to exit from it.

The way in which Deyn intones her narration is in itself a marvel of emotive enunciation. She speaks not as if addressing a figurative audience, but as if she is reciting poetry in private. This acknowledgement of the story's literary roots is suggestive of a conceit that's close to director Terence Davies' heart - that art and life are not merely inextricable from one another, but are the same thing. The subtlety with which this stylistic gradation is executed exemplifies how deeply Davies understands the medium. His process of adaptation isn't merely a case of pruning back a source to fit the screen, but ingesting it whole and producing a work that could only exist as a film. Deyn, it appears, is wholly simpatico with this artisan process.

Davies' masterful *Sunset Song* offers a panoramic survey of an era as directly experienced by a single person. Chris' abusive father (Peter Mullan) dominates the film's opening chapter, a quick-tempered man's man who is so consumed by self-loathing that he drives away those close to him. His wrath is later displaced by the onset of World War One. The brutalising effects of the conflict on her affectionate beau, Ewan Tavendale (Kevin Guthrie), are bracingly felt through her restricted perspective. Each scene segues into the next with a vaporous cross-dissolve as time is seen to build and destroy, softly, and without discrimination.

Chris loses her family, acquires a new one

and then loses that as well. A sexual awakening brings possibility and danger. The comfort of family life brings more loved ones to be placed on the chopping block. Yet the film is never morose, and she willingly adapts to the constant changes of situation. She's an optimist, though not to the point where she's able to brush off tragedy and move on – she takes on knowledge with each new setback, allowing it to make her stronger. Trite though it may sound, the immense power of *Sunset Song* derives from the insistence – via Davies and author Lewis Grassic Gibbon, upon whose sublime Scottish pastoral the film is based – that we must learn from the past without dwelling upon it.

The plush splendour of the landscape is a tonic for Chris' woes. It's her one constant. Davies films exteriors in 65mm and captures the idyllic rapture of gently shimmering wheat fields but avoids undue romanticisation. When Chris is indoors, the divine exterior light streams through the window and onto her face. Kinraddie is a utopia worth defending, which becomes the source of Chris' most immense bout of suffering when Ewan is called up to fight. And just as Davies opened out the closed romantic love-triangle in his previous film, The Deep Blue Sea, with a single tracking shot down a crowded Underground platform, he transforms Sunset Song into a universal tale with a single overhead shot depicting the muddy detritus of the battle field.

The film's most beautiful moment, however, serves to epitomise a perfect marriage between Davies' nakedly heartfelt sensibility and Deyn's meticulously worldly depiction of Chris. An extended wedding sequence harks back to the living tableaux of films like *Distant Voices, Still Lives* and *The Long Day Closes*, and it climaxes with Chris singing a song, a capella, to the tipsy revellers. It's utterly transfixing, because of Chris' bravery, and the rugged melodiousness of her voice, but also the fact that this moment of ecstasy is tinged with a palpable sadness. She loves Ewan, but understands that this state of bliss is transitory. **DAVID JENKINS**







Terence Davies

The British maestro on bringing his bucolic passion project, *Sunset Song*, to the big screen.

fter a stop-start career, Terence Davies is suddenly speeding. When *LWLies* met the director to talk about *Sunset Song*, he revealed that his next film, *A Quiet Passion*, about the life of reclusive poet Emily Dickinson, is in the can and his subsequent project, adapted from the book 'Mother of Sorrows' by Richard McCann, is whirring away.

LWLIES: WHERE DID YOU GET ALL THE MARVELLOUS RAIN IN SUNSET

SONG? Davies: We were based in Ballater, a town in the eastern part of the Cairngorms National park, due West of Aberdeen. It rains all the time but you can't photograph ordinary rain. You have to supplement it. You're sitting in this tent – all this bloody rain, all this mud and you just think, 'This is not glamorous. I'm sorry. It's not glamorous.' You finish a very tender scene in the barn and a horse farts and it's an opinion, you can tell. It was miserable physically. When we got to New Zealand, because we had to go somewhere where there was sunshine, they had the worst storms for 50 years. I thought, 'Oh terrific. We've come to the other side of the world. We could have stayed home and got this for free.' Luckily the weather broke and we had three and a half days of wonderful sunshine but there were times when you just thought, 'Oh god, why on earth are we doing it?'

HOW LONG WAS THE SHOOT? I think it was six weeks. We had very little money and it proved a lot of difficulty. We all took a gamble. Without that crew and that cast we couldn't have got a film. I miss everyone. I just miss everyone! When they do wonderful things that you haven't thought of, that's just bliss.

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR? When Chris gets her bad news, I had just written, "It's a lie," and the rest of her dialogue. She just kept on repeating it. You don't stop that because that's fantastic! I wouldn't have thought to keep on repeating it. The actors do a great deal of work on their own and when it's right you just have to let it go. And it's riveting. Agyness Deyn gives a quite remarkable performance. So does Kevin Guthrie. When he says, "You're always snivelling!" it just erupts from nowhere. Peter Mullan brought a great deal of warmth to his character which I didn't see. He's got a very melodic voice so at first it's lovely and warm, it's tender and you think, 'Oh, what a nice dad.' But you get on the wrong side of him and he's a brute.

WHAT DID YOU LEAVE OUT OF LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON'S SOURCE NOVEL?

There was the business of the girl that Will goes to see but that led us down a narrative route that was distracting. If she's just left as someone he goes to see [off-screen] and then he leaves, that's the way a lot of things happen in real life. They happen out of the blue. There's no preparation for them. The problem with some stories is they explain why this has happened.

Life isn't like that. I remember one of my brothers, now dead, coming and saying, 'I've joined the army for 22 guinea.' I just remember feeling so devastated. It just destroyed something inside me. That came out of the blue.

SO WE'RE UNPREPARED FOR LIFE WHEN IT HAPPENS? There's this idiot idea – it's an American idea – that we control our life. Of course we don't! We're at the vagaries of everything out there. You may be able to control how clean your body is and how clean the flat is but that's about where it ends. We are at the mercy of life and life is arbitrary. It's completely arbitrary. Why do some people suddenly get some awful disease and die at 54? Why? There's nothing we can do about it and it's really foolish to think that we control our lives because we don't.

ONE WAY YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR LIFE IS TO LOCK YOURSELF AWAY

FROM IT. Even then, it doesn't work. Life has a way of unlocking the door and getting in. It happened with Emily Dickinson. She locked herself away from the world but you can't lock life out. You just can't. You cannot do it. My mother had the right attitude. She was stoic – not in the old Greek sense but, 'These are the cards I've been given, I'll make the best of them.' If you've got that attitude, I think you're alright. That's some kind of safety net. Once you start thinking you can control things, well, that's the way to madness.

PETER MULLAN'S CHARACTER TRIES TO CONTROL HIS FAMILY AND IT TURNS HIM INTO A MONSTER. You can't control people by fear, or you can only do it for a certain length of time. My father was very violent and he died in agony, I'm glad to say, because he made our lives misery.

WHAT'S THE LEGACY OF THAT? The legacy of that is that I've got a huge amount of anger inside me. I very rarely lose my temper because I'm ferocious when I do. I don't like to lose it but when I do... there's an old Chinese saying, 'Beware the wrath of the patient man.' I'm not afraid of anybody. I was bullied for four years when I was at secondary school. You have all your esteem beaten out of you. If I think anybody's trying to bully me now, I really do go off at the deep end because I won't be bullied any more. I just won't. That's part of me. Also in me is the need to please and sometimes I think, 'Oh for goodness sake, stop doing it. People will make their own mind up. They don't need you to cosy them along.'

ARE THERE ANY MORE FILMS DRAWN FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES

INSIDE YOU? Certainly no more autobiographical films but I think as my manager said *A Quiet Passion* is my most autobiographical one. I really did feel that symbiotic towards Emily Dickinson





Warriors

Directed by BARNEY DOUGLAS
Released 13 NOVEMBER

his nobly intentioned documentary from Barney Douglas combines the story of a group of progressive youngsters out to challenge pernicious customs in their Kenyan village, with a love letter to the game of cricket.

Sonyonga is the conscientious young captain of the Maasai Warriors cricket team, who respects the elders of his village for their longstanding relationship with the land but disagrees with their practise of female genital mutilation (FGM). He believes cricket can play an important role in educating the elders, who are initially introduced arguing that a "Ntuppa" (uncircumcised girl) is harder to marry off. Their unenlightened claims on women's rights are intercut throughout the first half of the film with insights sourced from other residents of the village who are opposed to the controversial policy. These include the headteacher of a local girl's school, who asks rhetorically: "If FGM continues, how will arranged marriage be stopped? What the girls don't have is their ability to choose." By founding a gender-inclusive cricket club two kilometres from the village, Sonyonga and his teammates find an unusual way to challenge the status quo.

The film loosely documents the team's journey to partake in an amateur tournament at Lord's Cricket Ground, where they play barefoot and in traditional hunting gear. Ben Wilkins' cinematography juxtaposes breathtaking aerial footage of the expansive African plains against craneshots of the English cricketing hub and the urban architecture of central London, which looks alien in contrast. The film occasionally forgets itself, casting the issue of FGM aside in order to revel in the boys' experiences as tourists. The role of the sport itself is a little sensationalised, with Douglas clearly getting carried away chronicling the tournament so that a significant portion of the documentary consists of mundane montages overlaid with dubious pop music. HARRISON KELLY

ANTICIPATION. Sorry, is this a remake of the 1979 Walter Hill movie? Hardly a Googlewhack of a name.

ENJOYMENT. Besides some questionable stylistic elements, it's an endearing tale of tradition accommodating progress.

IN RETROSPECT. A rigorously journalistic yet playful take on an underrepresented issue.

63

Hand Gestures

Directed by FRANCESCO CLERICI Released 20 NOVEMBER

Philip Gröning's Into Great Silence and Gideon Koppel's Sleep Furiously, this fascinating miniature by Francesco Clerici chronicles the creation of a life-sized bronze sculpture of a dog in tired repose. The twist is that the men (and one woman, that we see) employed by the Milanese workshop at which this "event" occurs strictly abide by a production process originally devised during the 4th century BC. Yes, there's the odd air gun usage to remove loose debris, or a blow torch to attain a strong directional flame, but everything else is as it was. It begins with layers of red wax carefully manipulated by a sculptor into the shape of the mutt. Then an exoskeleton of plastic pipes is placed over the top and whose function only comes into play much later in the intricate procedure. A plaster casing is then produced via a series of painstaking stages, and then finally the molten bronze is slowly poured in from an old bucket.

There's a mesmeric quality to watching these craftsman go about their intricate business, and for the first half of the film it's entirely uncertain how this strange pink monolith they've produced will furnish them with a metal-based artwork. Clerici contrasts the methods we're seeing with those contained within archive footage, sometimes even filming his subjects from identical angles to emphasise how little these techniques have altered over the ages. And yet the film is never hectoringly nostalgic about the old ways or bothered with how such a tradition is allowed to withstand the wrecking-ball of capitalistic progress. There's no narration, very little talking and explanatory intertitles only arrive prior to the end credits, as this is a film which celebrates a history of artisanship and memory through a single scintillating act of creation. DAVID JENKINS

ANTICIPATION.

Ancient Italian Bronze Sculpting Techniques: The Movie.

2

ENJOYMENT.

Intoxicating, surprising and restrained.



IN RETROSPECT.

Chill out cinema par excellence.





Chemsex

Directed by WILLIAM FAIRMAN, MAX GOGARTY
Released 4 DECEMBER

or documentary makers, having subjects cry on camera must be some kind of theoretical Holy Grail. Actually being able to then build a cogent film around those tears - to actually supply them with ample and rigorous context, to explore their meaning - is another matter entirely. Directors William Fairman and Max Gogarty achieve this feat with gusto in their dynamic and powerful work, Chemsex, which explores a dangerous new fashion trend within certain sectors of the gay community. The title refers to a process by which gay men ingest hard drugs (often intravenously) prior to sexual trysts as a way to stimulate and prolong the orgasm. Though short-term gain is actually becoming long-term loss, as the entire subculture is revealed as one that is fuelled by glassy-eyed self-annihilation. Yet this is not an advocacy documentary, and it never once chides the hedonistic activities of its subjects, even though it does give ample room for the subjects to chide the activities themselves. And they do, often complemented with the aforementioned tears.

We learn in graphic detail exactly what's happening, how it's being perpetuated by social media (and how social media has even emojified things such as injections and HIV), we see a range of differing reactions to the pursuit, and those who have taken it upon themselves to tackle it. The manner in which the material is arranged keeps a dramatic sweep locked inside, as paralysing testimonies take strange twists, and character don't merely form, but they develop. There is one man who, very calmly and rationally, announces himself as a HIV denier, and has a handy email ready for anyone wanting to pick his brains regarding this controversial choice of personal status. It's a vigorous piece of hard investigative journalism which is (just) formally daring enough to justify its existence as a film rather than an eye-opening longread. DAVID JENKINS

ANTICIPATION. A Vice Films film Uh oh	3	
EN IOVAENT Distriction and the state		

ENJOYMENT. Riveting, unsentimental and always on the search for new angles.

IN RETROSPECT. A very strong piece of journalistic documentary.



The Hallow

Directed by CORIN HARDY
Starring JOSEPH MAWLE, BOJANA NOVAKOVIC,
MICHAEL MCELHATTON
Released 13 NOVEMBER

Outside of the *Leprechaun* series, Irish mythology has been rather underserved by genre-inclined filmmakers. With his debut feature, backwoods horror *The Hallow*, director and co-writer Corin Hardy goes some way to trying to rectify this, even if the end result isn't completely successful, nor as psychologically resonant as the best of legends.

Moving his wife Clare (Bojana Novakovic) and baby son Finn from London to a remote mill house by Irish woodlands, Adam (Joseph Mawle) is tasked by his employers to survey the local forests for land clearance, much to the chagrin of the unfriendly locals (Mawle's *Game of Thrones* alumni Michael McElhatton) and a one-scene policeman (Michael Smiley, delivering trailer-ready exposition with gusto). They think the family's trespassing on the sacred ground of fairies, banshees and freaky fungi will only spell doom and gloom, and they're soon enough proved right. Demonic forces come bumping in the night, and sceptical Adam himself becomes a physical embodiment of the clash between civilisation and superstition. *The Hallow* is at its best during its second act, when all hell breaks loose. After the initial mayhem, though, comes a long succession of repetitive, too similar scare tactics, and a foray into body-snatching/baby-snatching territory that kills much of the built-up momentum.

That said, there's still much to admire even when there are few frights on offer. With CGI used only sparingly, there's an enjoyable tactility to the animatronics, make-up and puppetry used for the squelchy body horror and creature designs, and a few memorable images, most involving an aflame scythe, endure even in the lagging stretches. At the time of writing, Hardy is currently attached to direct *The Crow* reboot, and his skill here with world-building on the design side of things makes that an at least vaguely enticing prospect. Here's hoping that one has a bit more meat to its macabre. JOSH SLATER-WILLIAMS

ANTICIPATION.	Positive buzz from Sundance
horror hounds.	

ENJOYMENT. Samey, but some arresting sequences scattered throughout.

IN RETROSPECT. Enough promise here to put Hardy on our radar.





When Harry Met Sally... (1989)

Directed by
ROB REINER
Starring
MEG RYAN
BILLY CRYSTAL
CARRIE FISHER
Released
11 DECEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Her: "You've never seen it?"
Me: "Um..."



ENJOYMENT.

Cynically lovely and a whip smart archetype for the modern rom-com.



IN RETROSPECT.

Despite being copied countless times, it still feels fresh and brimming with spirit. e all have blind spots, both when it comes to cinema and love. After someone new enters your life, these omissions can be revealed in stunning fashion. So goes my experience with Nora Ephron and Rob Reiner's wonderfully alive and breakneck rom-com *When Harry Met Sally....*Much to the chagrin of my new person, I'd never seen this iconic, game-changing genre film. "How is that possible?" she asked with the same stalwart persistence as Meg Ryan's Sally. I was speechless, very unlike Billy Crystal's verbose splatter gun of a character, Harry.

The film considers truth bombs couples will inevitably be arguing about until the end of time. Can men truly be platonic friends with women? Who does Ingrid Bergman really choose at the end of *Casablanca*? Why didn't Bruno Kirby and Carrie Fisher star in their own romantic comedy spinoff? Except the film itself is more about the lifelong pursuit of harmony. We see that it is indeed possible when Reiner cuts away from his protagonists to happy elderly love birds directly addressing the camera.

Ephron's playful and serpentine script highlights the contradictions of romance, specifically the messiness of conversations between men and women. In the opening sequence, Harry and Sally are introduced for the first time in college immediately before they carpool together from Chicago to New York City. Both are beginning anew in the Big Apple, yet each is already set in their ways. Predictably, they don't get along. Years later, fate intervenes and Harry meets Sally again, and then again at various stages in their lives. Eventually a friendship develops and genre

conventions kick into high gear. He said, she said, and around we go. It's all been done a million times since the film's release in 1989, but never this well.

Reiner plays down the flash, utilising longer takes to allow the actors plenty of room to revel in Ephron's words. There is one zany split screen sequence involving all four key characters that redefines the definition of pillow talk. It stands out as one of the film's few purely stylised moments. From a performance angle, Ryan's feels like a vulnerable precursor to her later roles in *Sleepless in Seattle* and *You've Got Mail*, while Crystal toes the line between cynic and romantic with arrogant glee.

Harry and Sally's long-gestating relationship is littered with miscommunications and personal jabs. These add up over the years, sometimes resulting in uncomfortable and funny outbursts, the most famous of which involves a particularly loud lunch date. But the film's exploration of human compromise seems most revolutionary now. Considering its subtle treatment of time passing and people changing, When Harry Met Sally... might not immediately seem grand, but it's one of the few epics in the romantic comedy genre. Still, each moment feels uniquely intimate, lived-in, and effusive. The characters themselves don't immediately sense the chemistry they share, but the audience certainly does. Love at first sight takes a long time. The trouble with Harry and Sally is they don't always realise this, instead denying their feelings out of unease or doubt. One final truth bomb: Erase the fear and only then can "happily ever after" finally begin. **GLENN HEATH JR**

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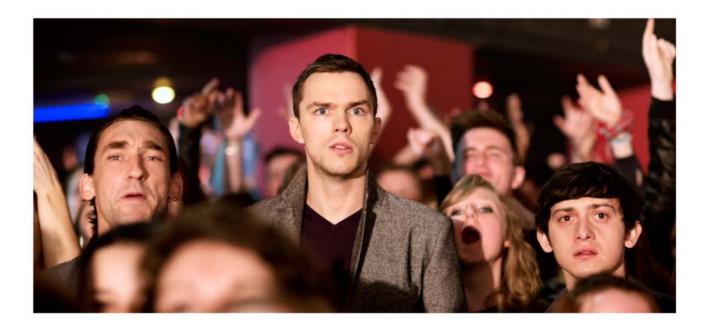
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Kill Your Friends

Directed by
OWEN HARRIS
Starring
NICHOLAS HOULT
ED SKREIN
ROSANNA ARQUETTE
Released
6 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Never really shone to Nicholas Hoult, but he earned big points for Mad Max: Fury Road.



ENJOYMENT.

A film that wants you to hate it and achieves that aim.



IN RETROSPECT.

Will likely wear its one-star reviews as a badge of honour.

wen Harris' Kill Your Friends is a film which dares the viewer to utterly despise its every frame. Its raison d'être is to evoke unadulterated contempt - of people, of places, of trends, of art, of business, of everyone and everything. Its cocksure cynicism is precision primed to alienate. It's a film which scribbles a chalk penis on the back of your jacket, nudges you into a job interview and then Periscopes the event from the corridor. Entirely in line with its unambiguous aims, this film does manage to inspire a sense of utter, putrefying revulsion towards it. The sheer, all-encompassing breadth of its casual abhorrence was in itself a feat. If you get a kick out of spending time with some of history's most repellant shitbags, then Kill Your Friends is a double lottery win. Does the fact that this film achieves what it sets out to do make it a success? Yes and no. Even when you're painting with dog shit, it's always possible to produce an ugly picture - just as it's equally possible to produce a pretty one. This one is a panoramic brown eyesore.

Kill Your Friends runs with the vague and unconvincing assumption that there were certain parties within the British music industry of the midto-late '90s who managed to coast along – excel, even – without expending an ounce of brain power. It was simply a case of careerist nit-wits making plays that were likely to get them a promotion, or nobble over one of their equally power hungry colleagues. Nicholas Hoult plays charmless tosspiece Steven Stelfox – the slick ladder-climber who is bracingly honest about his complete dearth of professional nous and disinterest in the high-stakes world of music A&R. A voiceover

narration states this point-blank were there any ambiguity over the matter, and this is intended as a way to help us empathise with Stelfox as he's being forthright about his modest capabilities. Weak parodies of real bands are paraded through the offices, observations about how they're fame-hungry parasites are passed off as cutting cultural commentary. A jolly to Cannes to find the next big superhit results in Stelfox picking up the rights to an awful, X-rated house tune when he sees people dancing to it in a club. He sees this high-risk ploy as a way to impress his bosses - his impulse that the public at large will eat up any old rubbish is shared by the filmmakers. It's such a tin-eared, hollow, sneering depiction of the era that nothing even vaguely resembling valuable insight lands.

What someone has then done is read Bret Easton Ellis' American Psycho and taken its (admittedly strident) satirical intent at face value, as the second half of the film focuses on Stelfox's transformation from cheeky chancer to actual homicidal maniac. With no sign that any of this should be consumed as an anti-corporate allegory, the film piles up the unlikely twists, the bumbling one-note characters and the "clever" set-pieces which exist to emphasise the sickening extent of Stelfox's Machiavellian moxie. Bad writing and blind chance conspire to keep our hero out of prison. No-one cares what he's doing - and that's the joke. Underneath the smile and the pluck, everyone is a self-serving, narcissistic cretin. Not only does this film want you to hate every fibre of its being, it hates you right back. Thanks. DAVID JENKINS



The Return of the Jedi

ON SET...

he early 1980s was an exciting time to be alive and in England. Not only did the old stick-in-the-muds who ran the show finally decide to scrap the kind of state ownership that belonged in Soviet Russia, but Maggie finally gave Britons something to be proud of: she got rid of the nanny-state curbs on how much we could all spend on tick - laying the foundations of the prosperity/consequencefree debt we all enjoy today.

So it was with a spring in my step (thanks to box-fresh Elesse tennis shoes billed to my Flexible Friend) that I made my way to Pinewood Studios. In my hand was a telex from George Lucas inviting me to sit in on pre-prod for Star Wars: The Return of the Jedi, the last of his space movies. It was a magnanimous gesture typical of George, who'd been stung by my low opinion of the first picture - a position that had cost me plenty of kudos at my local AD&D meets too. Gary Gygax was very rude, I remember that. What no one but I seems to have been willing to say, then or since, is that Star Wars just seemed to be one big merchandise-marketing exercise. Someone should write something about that.

But George had redeemed himself in my eyes with his sequel The Empire Strikes Back, a fabulistic psychological drama that drew on the darker strands of Greek myth and which, in its use of puppety forestal allegory, contained flourishes that later informed Jim Henson's A Muppet Throne of Blood (1985). So I was heartened to see that George had Larry Kasdan back on board as penman to tie up the series once and for all, before no doubt moving on to more cinematically mature work.

I was explaining all this to Harry Ford, the Hanover Street star who also played Han Solo in the space movies. But he was more interested, as usual, in bending my ear about his muchmaligned ancestor "the coward" Robert. Back then it was something of an obsession for Hal, and if he cornered you at a shindig, he would bludgeon you into agreeing that slotting Jesse James in his own parlour was a service to the

On this day, the only thing that got Harry more animated than Wild West reputational injustice was the latest shooting script for Jedi. At last, he trilled, Han Solo was going to die. And not just any old exit but a redemptive martyrdom for the Rebellion that would embroider epic tragedy into the tale's denouement. There was no way back from this ending. What's more, the Princess was to be left facing up to realpolitik in a faction-riven post-revolutionary galaxy - a brutal crackdown on dissidents would doubtless be required. All the while, Skywalker himself was a war-scarred basket-case unable to function in civil society. Matters were only lightened by the two robot people marrying each other, and the whole thing was a masterwork finale of mythic grandeur interlaced with the tropes of late 20th

Two hours and a read-through later, George laid the script down on his office desk looking

like a man set free. He loved it, he told Larry Kasdan and me. This was exactly the kind of shift he'd been searching for ever since the first movie had become such an unexpected commercial juggernaut. Han Solo became a true hero at the cost of his own life; a damaged Luke, innocence violated, rode into the sunset; and Leia was left weeping and alone, her power a gilded cage perched atop a frozen mountain called Loneliness. It was a Fin of which Kurosawa or Leone could have been proud. "Better still," said George, "I can stop writing this juvenile horse shit!" We laughed. "Precisely," I said, "because there are no dollars in dead Han Solo toys!" We all laughed again. "No there aren't," said George. I chuckled. And then no one was laughing. George picked up the script again and let its pages flick, front to back, back to front. The room was quiet. The sound of a plane crossing the clear-blue sky above Pinewood grew and grew and faded. All the while George looked at the sheaf of paper in his hands like a little boy in a toy shop holding for the last time an expensive wonder he could never afford in a million parsecs - a 1/32nd scale Millenium Falcon with internal LED lighting and lifelike plasma-cannon sounds (action figures not included), for example. Without looking up he said, "Larry, I'm not sure about these lizardy creatures who inhabit the moon of Endor. I was thinking something, you know, a little more kid-friendly."

"George..." said Larry.

"It's just one change, Larry."

Larry's eyes were glassy with emotion but he forced a smiled. "Really, George?"

At last, George met his gaze and I saw it held the same bleak acceptance. "Really, Larry."



Grandma

Directed by
PAUL WEITZ
Starring
LILY TOMLIN
JULIA GARNER
MARCIA GAY HARDEN
Released
11 DECEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

The closing night film at Sundance – could be really good or really cutesy.



ENJOYMENT.

Tomlin is very funny, and Garner has a sweet presence. The two work well together.



IN RETROSPECT.

A fun way to spend an hour and 19 minutes, if not a major work.

randma is an easy movie to like, running a fleet 79 minutes and providing a well-deserved showcase for Lily Tomlin. Yet despite its handling of potentially controversial material, it doesn't leave much of an impression. The plot is simple: a journey from point A to point B with quirky stops along the way. Elle Reid (Tomlin) is the grandma, a brusque lesbian poet who doesn't suffer fools gladly, and whose granddaughter, Sage (Julia Garner), comes to her for help when she finds herself unexpectedly pregnant without the money to get an abortion.

Abortion is a touchy subject, and this film deserves credit for handling it matter of factly and not having Sage doubt her decision. Overall, it's tonally similar to last year's *Obvious Child*, while avoiding that film's lapse into cliché rom-com territory. *Grandma*'s focus is on the relationship between Elle and Sage – Sage's boyfriend is a buffoonish bro who clearly doesn't deserve her. Sage, with her blonde curls and fine bone structure, has an angelic quality that stands in contrast to Elle's tough presence, and the tension between the two of them provides affectionate laughs.

At times, though, Elle feels too much like a Manic Pixie Dream Grandma. Consider early in the film, when we see that she has cut up her credit cards and hung them in a mobile, a means of "transmogrifying" her life into art. If only she hadn't acted out in such a quirky way, it would've been so much easier to help Sage. With little money and no credit cards, they have to visit a variety of Elle's friends in order to get the \$600 they need for

the procedure. There is also the moment before walking into the abortion clinic when a young girl protesting outside punches Elle. Being punched by a child feels like some kind of cutesy appropriation of broad comedy, and it doesn't work.

The film also makes use of intertitles for each chapter of their journey - a device that serves mostly to call attention to details that we would notice anyway. Elle is a poet, and perhaps the intertitles are a way of giving the film a poetic feel, but it seems too self-conscious a device, especially considering the director's first film was American Pie. Poetic devices or not, Grandma is unquestionably the more subtle film. In one of the strongest sequences, Elle and Sage visit Karl (Sam Elliott), Elle's former fling. In a relatively short scene, Tomlin and Elliott establish a believable connection - Elliott's drawl adds instant gravity to the proceedings, and as the two stand close to one anther, and Elle scans the house, looking at pictures of his children, a believable portrait of a past relationship is painted. Karl ends up refusing to give the money on moral grounds, but the detour is nevertheless valuable, functioning as a play in miniature.

It's not often we see a film that portrays a 75 year old as multifaceted, and gives her zingers (the way Tomlin delivers the line, "She's already pregnant!" when a guy looks at her granddaughter is one of the film's best moments), so *Grandma* is refreshing in that record. While it is hindered by a number of precious indie trappings, it manages to be an overall poignant film, with two memorable performances at its core. ABBEY BENDER



Tangerine

Directed by
SEAN BAKER
Starring
MYA TAYLOR
KITANA KIKI RODRIGUEZ
KARREN KARAGULIAN
Released
13 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Word on the street is it's as intense as Crank.



ENJOYMENT.

A dazzling bauble of melodrama and fast paced merriment.



IN RETROSPECT.

It's a Christmas miracle!

ean Baker's fifth feature film opens on two transgender sex workers sharing a doughnut on the morning of Christmas Eve in a shop on the intersection of Santa Monica and Highland in LA. It's a beautifully judged moment that introduces these tempestuous characters in an intimate and energetic manner as they gossip and talk about their love lives. It is also the calm before the storm, with Alexandra (Mya Taylor) accidentally revealing to her best friend Sin-Dee (Kitana Kiki Rodriguez) that her boyfriend and pimp Chester (one of Baker's regular players James Ransone) has been cheating on her with a white girl. Crazed with jealousy, Sin-Dee goes on a rampage across town in search of Chester and the mystery woman and in doing so delivers gloriously in-your-face moments of pure delight.

The characters talk trash with as much bite as Nicki Minaj, defiantly spitting in the face of good taste. Lines like, "You didn't have to Chris Brown the girl!" zing from the mouths of Taylor and Rodriguez, providing unadulterated joy in the process. There are shades of John Waters-style debauchery at times and it's all the more enjoyable for it, but it is also sincere, unguarded and feels lived in. Like Jennie Livingston's New York-set documentary about the art of Vogueing, Paris Is Burning, it bristles with an animated energy but is also rooted in reality. Mya lives close by to the neighbourhood where the film is shot and told Baker stories about the illegal activity in the area and Kiki was a trans mentor. They are both transgender people.

Much has been made of the fact that Baker shot his film on three iPhone 5s, using a clip on anamorphic lens - an impressive feat considering how gorgeous the final product is. Baker glides his camera across the sun-smeared vista of Hollywood at Christmas time, turning the grime and dust into something sparkly and wondrous. And as seen in his previous work, Baker has a way of directing his actors that gets the best out of them. He ekes every last ounce of comedy and dramatic value out of their physical performances using the superb soundtrack to parallel emotion. A vengeful Sin-Dee struts along to aggressive Jersey Club anthems and the next moment Alexandra regales her colourful voyage to Beethoven's 'Coriolan Overture' while preparing for a festive blow job in a car wash. There are bursts of intense brutality but ultimately this a vibrant and often hilarious slice of life grounded by a friendship formed on the streets.

There's no preaching and there's no big moral conclusion, this is simply a well-crafted story penned by Baker and co-writer Chris Bergoch and featuring two leads who whip up delicious moments of frenzy and melancholy that resonate deeply as they hurtle across the finish line to a claustrophobic and confrontational climax. There's so much screeching melodrama crammed in to its 88-minute runtime that it feels like it's over as quickly as it started. *Tangerine* is an example of low-budget filmmaking at its best, and it exists as living proof that there is really no excuse to not be making movies if you've got a smartphone in your pocket. KATHERINE MCLAUGHLIN



Bone Tomahawk

Directed by
S CRAIG ZAHLER
Starring
KURT RUSSELL
RICHARD JENKINS
PATRICK WILSON

Released
11 DECEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

The Descent with cowboys.



ENJOYMENT.

Tombstone with cannibals.



IN RETROSPECT.

A precariously balanced, genre-literate oddity with something to say.

he hook of Bone Tomahawk - Kurt Russell fighting cannibals in a frontier town - may suggest a comical romp, but novelist and first-time director S Craig Zahler's ambitions are far loftier than low stakes revivalist exploitation. It's an unpredictable, offbeat picture, which places the mythical notion of the West at the point of convergence between horror and the western. Zahler shows himself to be an adroit navigator of both genres, and Bone Tomahawk is at its best when it exploits the common ground between the two. The story concerns local sheriff Franklin Hunt (Russell) and his three companions - lame tough guy Arthur (Patrick Wilson), dandy killer John (Matthew Fox) and dim-witted Chicory (Richard Jenkins) - on a journey to rescue a group of captives from the lair of a cannibalistic tribe.

While the picture does riff on Russell's genre credentials, it largely eschews the self-conscious brand of B-movie nostalgia one would expect from such a premise, opting instead for a patient, almost somber unravelling. The pace can be leisurely to the point of ponderousness, but the frequent digressions yield darkly comic grace notes, which have a deliciously macabre, Coensian edge. Covering everything from the mechanics of cutting veins in the neck to the intricacies of reading in the bath, each story is rife with deliberate anachronisms, delivered with deadpan relish. However, while these constant conversational detours may give the film some flavour, they put it in a precarious commercial position; too languorous for the genre crowd perhaps, and too lurid for the art house.

As soon as the abduction is discovered, the locals, ignorant of their own complicity in the chain of events, scramble to blame the Native Americans, thus setting off the film's narrative of imperialist reckoning. Each member of the search party embodies a distinct strand of American exceptionalism, be it the blind moral purpose of Hunt or the insidiously impassive braggadocio of Jack, decked in colonial white as he boasts of killing 116 Indians. Each man is driven by a sense of manifest destiny, eager to impose his own values onto a hostile, barren land ("We'll make sure all of this has value"). They fail to see that they're alone in their crusade. As Arthur says, semi-opaquely, when speaking in his sleep, "Big James would shed a tear if any calves went astray."

Both horror and the western deal, to varying degrees, with the fear of the other - typically a symbolic representation of the anxiety of the age. Zahler's stroke of brilliance is in appropriating an antagonist typically associated with horror into the western milieu, and using it to critique the imperialist impulses of the latter. The cannibal brings chaos to the settlers' fragile, decrepit order, and they are too ensconced in their own world to stem it. It is no coincidence that the film's key line is spoken by one of the only women featured - "This is why frontier life is so difficult. Not because of the Indians... but because of the idiots." If the studio era showed us how the West was won, then Bone Tomahawk posits a bold argument for why it was lost - to put it very blundly, rampant male stupidity.

CRAIG WILLIAMS



Brooklyn

Directed by
JOHN CROWLEY
Starring
SAOIRSE RONAN
EMORY COHEN
DOMHNALL GLEESON
Released
6 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Acclaimed novel, solid casting, safe pair of hands behind the camera. Looks decent, if not necessarily thrill-a-minute.



ENJOYMENT.

Ronan is mesmerising and it's a story worth telling, but where's the passion?



IN RETROSPECT.

There's a basic emotional truth about the material which stays with you.

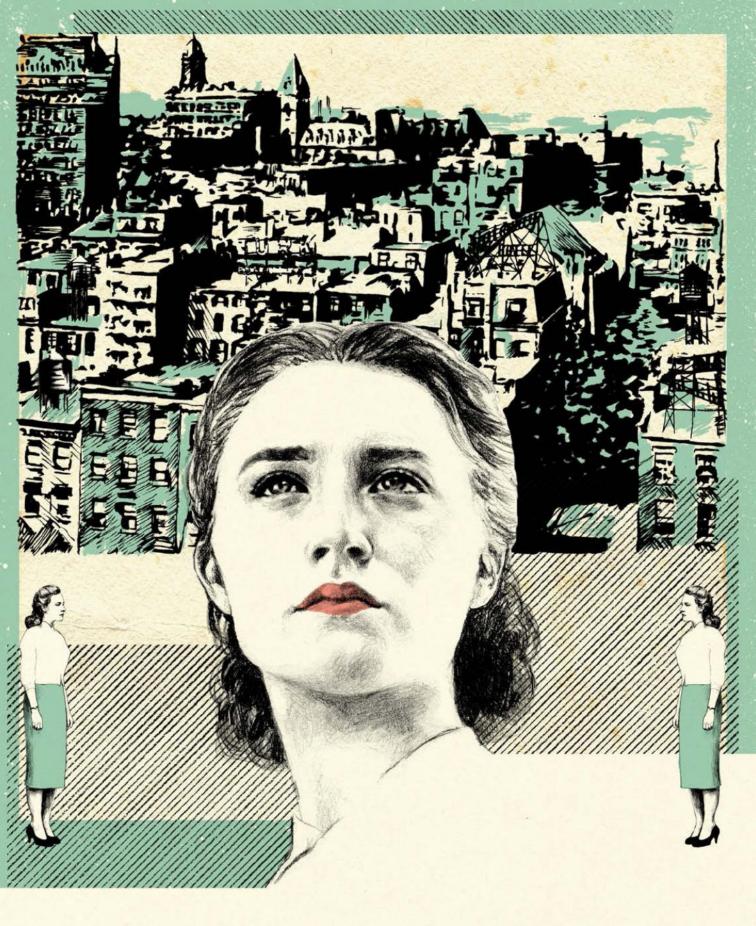
n screen she's been a vampire, a dead girl, a trained teenage killer, and possessed by an alien being. So is there anything normal about Saoirse Ronan? Right from the moment we first saw her at age 13 in Atonement as the worryingly precocious younger sister at the big house, she's always seemed someone set apart, which makes playing an ordinary Irish village girl in this adaptation of Colm Tóibín's noted novel the sort of challenge which might just set the agenda for the rest of her career. At first there's almost something shocking about seeing her character, Eilis, behind the counter in an Enniscorthy grocery store, but such is the moribund nature of life in early 1950s Ireland - all boiled potatoes and Arran knitwear - we know she's bound for better things. That title is a bit of a giveaway,

The point of the story though – and it's one worth making – is that while a new start in America brings expanded horizons, the whole journey's not without a keening sense of loss. Ronan absolutely nails the steely sense of self-preservation which makes Eilis certain she has to go, yet her effortlessly layered performance wraps it inside the unaffected homeyness of a sheltered country girl who'll desperately miss her mum and sister when she leaves. That undertow of sadness, perhaps even guilt at being selfish enough to make the big move, keeps the rest of the movie emotionally grounded, as Ronan convinces us she's growing up before our very eyes. With her new life circumscribed by a kindly priest and mother-

hen landlady – Jim Broadbent and Julie Walters respectively providing awards-season pedigree – Brooklyn itself turns out to be something of an Irish colony, but night-classes and the romantic attentions of Emory Cohen's hard-working Italian-American plumber, spark an appreciably developing self-confidence.

Indeed, when challenging circumstances land Eilis on the boat back to the old country, she returns to her small town a changed woman, walking the streets with a newly defined sense of self-worth which captures the attention of blazer-wearing Domhnall Gleeson, the sort of catch who'd once have been way out of her pay grade. It's heartening to see, and if the film's astute enough to ensure that both suitors are nice enough in their own way, Ronan's so much smarter than the men in her life, and there's no grand passion here.

You could read that as a statement about the historic limitations on women's ability to shape their own lives, yet Michael Brook's insistent score ill-advisedly keeps trying to fan flames of feeling which just aren't present. Meanwhile, director John Crowley, a canny observer of fine performances, brings little formal thrust when Ronan's not on screen, and does seem to be struggling to convey period authenticity on an over-stretched budget. We're never really transported to early '50s Brooklyn, but Ronan's ever-fascinating gaze takes us emotionally where the story needs to go. She is though, pretty much the whole show. TREVOR JOHNSTON



Saoirse Ronan

The *Brooklyn* star discusses stepping back into 1950s New York.

wenty-one-year-old Irish actress Saoirse Ronan is doing a suspiciously smooth job of transitioning from child stardom to chameleonic adult character actor. She fitted into Wes Anderson's heightened universe for *The Grand Budapest Hotel* and shone as a warstricken indie waif in *How I Live Now*. John Crowley's *Brookyln* is adapted by screenwriter Nick Hornby from Colm Tóibín's 2009 novel about a young girl from smalltown Ireland forced to emigrate to America. It features Ronan's best performance yet. She imbues her character, Eilis, with such rawness and vulnerability that even the most standard scenes in her new home in Brookyln seem like they could hurt her.

LWLIES: DID YOU READ COLM TÓIBÍN'S SOURCE NOVEL BEFORE MAKING BROOKLYN, OR HAD YOU READ IT ALREADY? Ronan: I read it years ago and I really loved it at the time. The story took on a whole new meaning when it came to making the film. Between the period of when I had read the script and when we actually made the movie, I had moved over to London and had gone through that transition personally myself so it took on a much deeper meaning.

DID IT FEEL REWARDING TO HAVE AN ARTISTIC OUTLET FOR WHAT YOU WERE GOING THROUGH? I guess it did. It took me a while to appreciate it because from the very beginning there was a huge responsibility on myself and John and everyone involved for us to make it authentic and tell an honest story. Not only of what a lot of Irish people have gone through but also to portray a woman on screen and have it be a detailed, layered, interesting character. Somebody who can carry us through a whole film without being someone who just moans all the time or is a bit of a pushover or is too harsh. To find that nuance was really important. I felt a huge responsibility in that respect. And this was the first Irish film about an Irish girl that I had been involved in, where we shot at home. We shot in Enniscorthy which is like 20 minutes away from where I grew up. I went into it thinking, 'This is great, this'll be a great job to do, and I'll be at home,' and thought about it in a much more simple way. Then all of a sudden, John opened this door to a whole other level of depth that I hadn't even thought about. It was him getting women so well. Between him and Nick and Colm, these three great men really exposed all of us - all of the actors involved, men and women - to the questions that the story was really trying to raise.

WHEN SHE FIRST ARRIVES IN BROOKLYN, YOUR CHARACTER IS TOO SCARED TO LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON FOR HER. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE PEOPLE WHO CAN'T BE HONEST ABOUT HOW THEY FEEL? Even though it's a tough situation to be in, there is also something really admirable about someone who just keeps going. I'm very open about how I feel and I think that comes down to my parents – I was always encouraged to be open about how I felt. I was spoken to like an equal, without us being peers. But I don't know what advice I'd give to someone. It's not a good idea to bottle those things up. Whenever I try to keep things under wraps I can't and it's physically kind of uncomfortable. You need to find someone that you can confide in. If you can't do it, ride it out. Or talk out loud and say how you feel; even if there's nobody there, just say, "This is how I'm feeling right now and I don't know what to do... blah blah blah.' It's always good to vent in some way, whether it's through music or art or whatever.

BROOKLYN IS AN EMOTIONAL FILM BUT ALSO A LOT OF DETAIL AND ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO RENDERING PERIOD SETTINGS, WITH CLOTHES AND LOCATIONS. WERE SETS BUILT? HOW DID THE PRODUCTION GET THE 1950S LOOK? We had a great costume designer, Odile (Dicks-Mireaux), who stays very true to the period she works in, which was fantastic. We wore bras and stockings from that time period and, if the bras were too perky, we needed to take them down a little bit. She was so on it, and so tuned into the aesthetic of that time, and always wanted to make sure it was as authentic as possible. Our sets, most of them, were made. We used a little bit of CG but, apart from that, everything was actually hand-built. When we worked in Enniscorthy we dated back the street where the shop is at the very start and where the dance hall is. There were new shop fronts put on, or the shop fronts were painted and they put signs up. It was really nice in this day and age when everything is CG to within an inch of its life, to have something just be tactile and real. It definitely sets the atmosphere an awful lot more.

DID COLM HELP WITH THE MAKING OF THE FILM? Well, he came to visit us a couple of times and he was actually an extra in the immigration scene. He was a gas. We had him for the day and he had his little outfit and his cap on, and he took it very seriously. He knew what hand to have his prop in and where he had to walk to, and when he had to stop and who he was talking to in the scene and all that. It was great to have him involved. I haven't watched it so I don't know, but I'd be interested to know if you can see him in the background



Black Mass

Directed by
SCOTT COOPER
Starring
JOHNNY DEPP
BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH
DAKOTA JOHNSON
Released
27 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Is this the good Johnny Depp movie we've been promised for so long?



ENJOYMENT.

Hells no.



IN RETROSPECT.

A compendium of dull gangster shenanigans which shirks hard reality at every turn. ames "Whitey" Bulger began his criminal career at the tender age of 14, when he was arrested and charged with larceny; *Black Mass*, Scott Cooper's stultifyingly anaemic biopic, begins in 1975, well after the time he served in Alcatraz. We know that the film is set (and was, commendably, shot) in Boston, because the word "Southie" (Bulger's neighbourhood terrain) is said approximately as many times as "fuck" is in *The Big Lebowski* – the film generally takes similarly clunky pains to convince us of its veracity.

And yet this is clearly a film that is making generic, unconvincing guesses about its subject and milieu. A very pertinent example: Whitey's one son died in 1973, but the film bumps the date up to the late '70s, at some unspecified point (*Black Mass* is fuzzy on the exact progression of time, among other things) after the opening "1975" card. The collective voiceover (the tell-don't-show screenplay is credited to Jez Butterworth and Mark Mallouk), sourced from various former criminal associates turning informants to the FBI, explicitly attributes an increase in Whitey's ambition and sheer violence to this death, but such chronological scrambling is demonstrably a screenwriter's lazy convenience.

This penchant for easy psychologising is especially bothersome because *Black Mass* reduces the exact details of Whitey's operations to a few lines about all the rackets he ran and very little demonstration of what that amounted to; the criminal operation's particulars are of no interest to the filmmakers. Despite its lack of specificity, the film has (still!) been heavily criticised for its

remaining lack of accuracy by, among others, Kevin Weeks, a former associate whose testimony at the beginning of the film (delivered by a glowering Jesse Plemons) structures the narrative. Weeks has numerous criticisms of particular details and general wrong-headed characterisation (the mobsters didn't endlessly swear at each other, as they reflexively do here), but it doesn't take a criminal record to sense that this is a film made by people guessing about the facts rather than really understanding them.

Scott Cooper's staggeringly dull film is first a showcase for Johnny Depp. Bald and beady-eyed, Depp delivers a showily unshowy performance: his Whitey is lacking in charisma, a moody sulker with an itchy trigger finger. Depp is actually fine and convincing, but the film wants to make him as black-hole uninteresting as possible and succeeds in this dubious task. The main narrative arc is his relationship with FBI agent John Connolly (Joel Edgerton) in a mutual back-scratching deal whereby Bulger's information about the Italian mob secured his ability to run amuck. This, predictably, did not end well - here, again, the film is very fuzzy on the bigger picture context on the FBI's side. Its ill-fitting portentousness is created through a tiny visual vocabulary and grimly predictable plot choices. Cooper's signature move is to slowly draw the camera backwards after particularly momentous kills or tragedies, to underline the importance of the moment; with seemingly no other ideas, he repeats this gesture throughout, which sums up the unsurprising two hours as a whole. VADIM RIZOV



Unbranded

Directed by
PHILLIP BARIBEAU
Starring
BEN MASTERS
BEN THAMER
JONNY FITZSIMONS
Released
27 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Wild wild horses, couldn't drag me away.



ENJOYMENT.

Like five hours of Discovery Channel shoehorned into a two-hour movie.



IN RETROSPECT.

The gift shop DVD from an exciting horse farm.

en Masters, Ben Thamer, Jonny Fitzsimons and Thomas Glover are the young men in the documentary *Unbranded*, who tell us proudly they will travel a pack of wild mustangs 3,000 miles from Mexico to the Canadian border. They'll take these adopted horses through Texas, Arizona, Idaho and Montana: "mountains, deserts, canyons – gnarly country." But what they don't quite tell us is why.

In a sense, it's self-explanatory. The American frontiersman has always had a kinship with the horse, a subtext in countless westerns, occasionally foregrounded in something like Hidalgo or The Misfits. The boys have just graduated from Texas A&M, and they want an adventure and a challenge before they settle down to jobs and marriage. Or, as George Mallory would have it, because it's there. But seeing as they don't explicitly state a reason, and the closest they get is, "there's not much room out there for them and there's not much room out there for us," one wonders what a Werner Herzog would have found in this material - the void of man's existence, locked in a tragic affinity with orphaned beasts against a landscape of looming death. To which a cowboy can only determine - as Jonny Fitzsimmons does - that he's, "Born with a G on one foot and an O on the other."

The director of *Unbranded* is Phillip Baribeau, who unfortunately does not have such a sense of the epic or poetic, and instead gives us the Discovery Channel version. The outdoor spirit of the adventurers is inspiring, and there are visceral moments of pain, like when horses get stuck with

cacti or stumble and roll down hills. There are moments of quirk and camaraderie, like when the boys confess that long stretches of riding on horseback are boring and they ride while reading paperbacks like 'Fifty Shades of Grey'. And there is the audaciousness of the journey, such as passing through the Grand Canyon via thin, windy ledges - "If there's a loose rock, we're dead." Very little of this, however, is captured by Baribeau with a sense of majesty - instead, there are generic slo-mo shots of spurs and horseshoes, and talking heads aplently but few shots that make clear exactly how many animals the gang is transporting. The televisual pacing is summed up by declarations like, "We did it! Took us three days!" after one daylight scene that lasts barely a minute.

We learn fascinating facts about the mustang being not a breed so much as a pet name, the overpopulation of them in the American West, the Bureau of Land Management's attempt to control their growth while respecting their legally protected status and the effect of their overgrazing on commercial livestock. ("That land seems unlimited when you drive across it, but it is limited.") Narratively, though, the film cuts between expert debate on scarcity of resources and the friendship of the fresh-faced travelling horsemen, never synthesising the differing themes of appropriate management levels of animals, the challenge of training them and the journey of a boys adventure. Just another thing that makes Unbranded feel like perfectly good TV, but not a movie at all. IAN MANTGANI





Steve McQueen: The Man and Le Mans

Directed by GABRIEL CLARKE, JOHN MCKENNA
Released 20 NOVEMBER

S teve McQueen: The Man and Le Mans serves two purposes: it's a love letter to a man the director clearly admires, and it is an examination of a failed vision, of an auteur who couldn't get on the same page with the studios, and whose failure, like that of all 'great men', was noble. It's a tricky balancing act, and the film fails to strike an even tone throughout.

By this point, McQueen is a myth; shorthand for a type of masculinity that, depending on your gender politics, is either sadly lost or thankfully left behind. The film definitely belongs to the former camp, and McQueen is our hero in the beginning and he remains so to the end. However, it is not simply a nostalgic romp: his first wife plays a sizeable role in the documentary, and the examination of his more dangerous actions problematises his persona. The movie eschews hagiography, but wants us to perceive him as worthy of our admiration, spending too much time trying to achieve this.

The other, more successful side of the documentary explores McQueen as auteur. He wanted to make a racing movie he could be proud of, a realistic film about the Le Mans experience. McQueen's persona has always suggested hidden depths, and the film successfully explores what can happen when a man pursues his dream relentlessly, with everything else a distant second. The fallout and unintended consequences drive the narrative and offer a glimpse of what it's like to be drawn into the vortex of movie star charisma.

Ironically, the documentary really works when it focuses on the driving and not the man. "It's a work of art," muses one of the drivers, when discussing racetrack driving. He compares it to ballet, and when the film is on the racing track, camera swerving with each bend, asphalt glistening, it does become that. In those moments you can see McQueen's vision, why he wanted to capture it the way he did. They hint at the great movie that could have been – in both cases. BEKZHAN SARSENBAY

ANTICIPATION. McQueen. Racing.	3
ENJOYMENT. McQueen. Racing.	3
IN RETROSPECT. McQueen. Racing.	3

The Fear of 13

Directed by DAVID SINGTON Released 13 NOVEMBER

A n American man of about 50, visible from about the shoulders upward, orates the story of his life. He does so with a theatrical flair, the words coming to him very naturally, as do fine descriptions of very specific moments. He can recall gestures, colours, sounds and smells from decades past. His particular skill for talking and telling makes you ponder as to whether this is a story that he's told many times before. Or, maybe it's a script that he's memorised word for word, nuance for nuance, beat for beat.

The man's name is Nick Yarris and he is telling the story of spending 20 years on death row for a crime he did not commit. There's the heartbreaking notion that this is a story he's had much time to prepare for, wallowing in his cell or, sometimes, solitary confinement. Even so, he's not so comfortable with the events of his life that he's able to prevent tears from bursting forth. His early life was spent boosting cars and shooting drugs. He was living rough, he had been booted out by his parents, his prospects were dim. And then in 1981 he found himself on the receiving end of a bum rap when the bludgeoned corpse of one Linda Mae Craig was found festering in the snow behind a garage. The papertrail (which had been tampered with massively) led all the way back to local miscreant Yarris.

Seeing Yarris sat there now confirms from the off that he was never actually given the chair, but David Sington's film is a chronicle of the herculean efforts expended to clear his name. There are twists and turns aplenty, though the film in the end never reveals itself as anything more more than a piece of high-wire first-person reportage. With so much of the detail of the case predicated by hard evidence, the initial notion that Yarris might well be silver tongued huckster who talked his way out of the can never comes to bear. DAVID JENKINS

ANTICIPATION.

The story of a death row inmate's daring escape.

6

ENJOYMENT.

Formally unexciting, but Yarris is a world class raconteur.



IN RETROSPECT.

A ripping yarn, a fascinating character.







My Nazi Legacy

Directed by DAVID EVANS
Starring PHILIPPE SANDS, NIKLAS FRANK,
HORST VON WÄCHTER
Released 20 NOVEMBER

O ne thing that most sane people do if the subject comes up in serious conversation is distance themselves from the Nazis. That's the default position. Nazis equals wrong. *My Nazi Legacy* studies a fascinating exception to this rule and in doing so explores the limits of rational debate, the binds of family loyalty and the network of subjective interpretations that create an individual's viewpoint.

Horst von Wächter and Niklas Frank are the sons of dead, high-ranking Nazi officials whose signatures are present on paperwork sentencing Jewish prisoners to death. Horst [son of Otto] has made a game out of finding logical loopholes that enable him to sympathise with and so excuse his father's deeds. Niklas Frank [son of Hanz] renounces his father at all opportunities ("My father deserved to die"). Human rights lawyer, Philippe Sands, who lost relatives in the Holocaust, narrates the documentary while questioning the two men as he escorts them on a tour around increasingly significant historical sites.

Sands is an intellectually adroit compere, Frank provides reassuring moral ubiquity, but it is stubborn, controversial, infuriating von Wächter who gives the film its bite. This old man in a baseball cap repeatedly explains that his father was a good man in a bad situation. It would be easier to dismiss his denial if it was terse, but he is always measured and articulate. Were the subject different, it would be tempting to applaud his analytical ingenuity and the dogged nature of his defence. Choosing not to is an ideological position that makes von Wächter a source of despair. Otto evaded condemnation at Nuremberg but, as Sands points out, based on the evidence the law would have seen him hung. Although it can feel like one, this documentary isn't a trial. Under democracy, there is clearly no subject that creates a consensus. My Nazi Legacy is a confrontational and engrossing testimony to the matter of opinion. SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN

ANTICIPATION. Meaty philosophical documentaries are to our taste.

4

ENJOYMENT. As compelling as a thriller. As weighty as a heartbeat.

4

IN RETROSPECT.

Essential documentary viewing.

My Skinny Sister

Directed by SANNA LENKEN
Starring REBECKA JOSEPHSON, AMY DEASISMONT,
HENRIK NORLÉN
Released 27 NOVEMBER

his impressively detailed Swedish anorexia drama is told from the perspective of Stella (Rebecka Josephson) whose older sister Katja (Amy Deasismont) is a competitive figure skater. Young Stella is the picture of age-appropriate whimsy with her round face and mischevious tendencies. Through her eyes, Katja's disordered symptoms at first seem like weird sisterly behaviour but they stack up until even this child can see that mental illness has snatched the body that once housed her flesh and blood.

Lenken does not glamorise anorexia. Katja is beautiful and talented and the eating disorder erodes rather than enhances these qualities. We hear vomit pelting a toilet bowl and the panic that rises every meal-time. We see an affectionate tease of a sister morph into a defensive monster. Deasismont gives an intelligently hysterical performance as a teenager in a bad place, offering enough of her character's pre-illness personality to show who is being lost.

Rebecka Josephson has a face that gives a little away. The way she performs small actions – like seeing an egg marked with her sister's name, pausing for thought, and then eating it anyway – has a puckish innocence that induces glee even as Katja's anorexia worsens.

This is Lenken's first feature, although she explored similar territory in a short set in an eating disorder facility (2013's *Eating Lunch*). Lenken fills in the rest of the family with broad strokes – mother is a distracted workaholic, father is good-natured but blind. One wonders how it will end as eating disorders don't lend themselves to tidy narrative resolutions. Lenken makes a decision that drives home the fact that – even though Katja is often front and centre – this is a story about a young person finding her way out of an inherited familial catastrophe. SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN

ANTICIPATION.

Respect has gathered following festival screenings.

3

ENJOYMENT. An authoritative take on how a severe eating disorder affects a family.



IN RETROSPECT.

The pitch may be shrill but such is anorexia.





Bridge of Spies

Directed by
STEVEN SPIELBERG
Starring
TOM HANKS
MARK RYLANCE
ALAN ALDA
Released



ANTICIPATION.

27 NOVEMBER

A new Spielberg film is always cause for celebration, but his last Tom Hanks joint was The Terminal.



ENJOYMENT.

Part spy story, part chamber piece, all gripping.



IN RETROSPECT.

As a Cold War film, it's strong. As a window into Spielberg's mind, it's essential.

f daddy issues were the unifying motif of Steven Spielberg's early films, his later work has been defined by an obsessive preoccupation with the value of a single human life, the peerless populist greying into a more philosophical matrix of concerns. How many soldiers are worth putting in harm's way in order to save Matt Damon? How many murdered Olympians are worth decades of escalating reprisals? How many Jews can a gold ring buy from the Nazis? "Whoever saves one life saves the world entire," Itzhak Stern tells Oskar Schindler, that Talmudic maxim serving as the most explicit indication that Spielberg isn't just the people's champion, but also God's accountant.

Bridge of Spies once again finds Spielberg trying to balance the scales, this delightful dad movie clarifying that the director isn't trying to determine the value of a human life, but restore it. It's a warm look at the Cold War that uses Janusz Kaminski's beloved floodlights to illuminate a footnote of American history, the film begins in New York circa 1957, where an unlikely bond was forged between a New York insurance lawyer and the Russian spy he was hired to defend in court. An electric opening chase sequence introduces Rudolf Abel (Mark Rylance, endearing), a soft-spoken Irishman whose orders come from behind the Iron Curtain, Following Abel's capture, the American government decides that a fair trial would be good PR, and they know just the guy to argue his side and roll over at the inevitable verdict. Enter family man James Donovan (Tom Hanks, decency rubbed into every fold of his Shar Pei face), who pisses off his entire country by treating Abel's case with the same care he would any other.

From there, the film morphs from courtroom drama to espionage thriller as Donovan finds himself flying to Berlin in order to secretly negotiate a prisoner exchange with the Russians: they'll get Abel, and the US will receive recently downed U-2 pilot Francis Gary

Powers in return. At Donovan's insistence, the deal eventually thickens to include an American exchange student who's imprisoned without cause while trying to flee East Germany before it's sealed off.

Scripted by Matt Charman and glazed with a (sporadically evident) rewrite by the Coen brothers, this genteel saga of moral equivalence, told through a series of rich background negotiations, is sustained by its conviction that wars are waged between governments and not people. Donovan, played by the ultimate everyman and saddled with a runny nose just to underscore his plainness, is a man like any other. Standing next to the Berlin Wall, its cement still wet, Donovan's sensible civilian nature distances the artificial border from historical fact and restores it to the realm of madness.

Bridge of Spies may not be anyone's favourite Spielberg movie - his inevitable slide towards mawkishness is more frustrating here than usual, and a protracted final scene stumbles as it tries to squeeze in a mess of contradictory ideas - but it's still greased with a master's touch, and few spy movies have ever been so enjoyably determined to see through all that cloak-and-dagger bullshit. The value of a life, Donovan affirms for his director, is equal to that of one's own. And in the process of making that argument, he typifies another gradual change in Spielberg's films: once he told stories about ordinary men being confronted with extraordinary things - now his ordinary men create those extraordinary things for themselves. It's the difference between climbing aboard an alien spaceship and passing an amendment that restores human rights to an entire race of people. Call it the banality of goodness. DAVID EHRLICH







Steve Jobs

Directed by
DANNY BOYLE
Starring
MICHAEL FASSBENDER
KATE WINSLET
SETH ROGEN
Released
13 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Gissa Jobs. Go on, gis it.



ENJOYMENT.

Jobs' job lot on jibber-jabber.



IN RETROSPECT.

Jobs for the boys.

Ithough the co-authors of Steve Jobs have worked across various genres in long careers, neither have monkeyed significantly with their signature moves. Director Boyle is known for his energetic, whiz-bang formal maximalism, generally appropriate for stories about drug-addled Scots (Trainspotting), or zombies marauding through London (28 Days Later...), but less so for depicting a trapped climber forced to snip off his own arm (127 Hours). In both television (The West Wing, The Newsroom) and film (The Social Network), screenwriter Aaron Sorkin has pioneered a brand of hyper-caffeinated, walk-and-talk ear-bending that's left scores of American donkeys lamenting the loss of their hind legs.

On paper, the marriage of such unbending authorial force with a subject as intimidating as the late inventor of products like the MacBook this review was written on – played here with icy, smirking cockiness by Michael Fassbender – is an intriguing fit. As exemplified most harshly by Jobs' steadfast refusal to publicly credit co-founder of Apple Inc, Steve Wozniak (Seth Rogen) for his contributions to the company, the spiky boffin was no natural collaborator. Rather he maintained a staunch belief in the efficacy of control freakery, with undeniably successful results.

It's actually Sorkin who wins out here. His screenplay is rigidly schematic, unfolding in three long, chamber piece-style acts all set on the eve of major product launches: the Macintosh in 1984; Jobs' NeXT education computer in 1988; and finally the glowingly transparent iMac in 1998. Like Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, which was elaborately constructed around TV quiz show questions, such

strictures engender mixed blessings.

On one hand, setting the film exclusively in moments of high stress - almost always indoors, in dressing rooms and corridors - fosters a bracingly hermetic quality. There's an immersive immediacy to the opening act especially, as Jobs attempts to balance the strain of a visit from Chrisann (Katherine Waterston), the extremely disgruntled mother of his child, with a serious technical cock-up that his colleague Andy (a bulked-up Michael Stuhlbarg) is struggling to rectify. Jobs also gets to engage in some quick-fire patter with his Polish assistant Joanna (an amusingly no-nonsense Kate Winslet). As the film ploughs ahead, enlivened by Alwin Küchler's prowling cinematography and Elliot Graham's propulsive editing, its general vibe is like an inverted take on Sting's famed lovemaking technique: all climax, no build-up.

Sadly, Sorkin's scripting stranglehold robs *Steve Jobs* of nuance. Character and story are left serving the form, rather than the other way around. Little is illuminated about Jobs other than that he's incompatible with others, emotionless and terrifyingly smart (say, like an Apple computer, perhaps?), before he learns some brisk life lessons in time to build some bridges with his daughter. (The filmmakers' callous vilification, then total sidelining, of Chrisann – and consequently the criminal waste of the excellent Waterston – should also be noted). Most of all, though, *Steve Jobs* is scuppered by its repetitive nature, with Sorkin's overly verbose dialogue and Boyle's proclivity for on-the-nose visual statements sorely testing the patience, even if one is prepared for them.

ASHLEY CLARKV



The Lady in the Van

Directed by
NICHOLAS HYTNER
Starring
ALEX JENNINGS
MAGGIE SMITH
JIM BROADBENT

Released

13 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

Looks like the cosy essence of middlebrow British cinema.



ENJOYMENT.

A complex relationship drama dressed as a jolly biopic.



IN RETROSPECT.

Bequeaths a respect for oddball muses and their secret stories.

n the early 1970s, playwright Alan Bennett became acquainted with an ageing female hobo who parked her van on his posh Camden crescent and stayed there for 15 years. He channelled this experience into a comic memoir which became a play which has now become a film. The directorial style of National Theatre don, Nicholas Hytner, mimics Bennett's cagey mode of being. On the surface, *The Lady in the Van* is mild to a fault but – like its author – it is powered by sharp observations about life and people.

The film is about life becoming art but also its flip-side: the need for a muse prompting an artist to engage with life. As Bennett, Alex Jennings essays a character who is more inclined to observe than participate. His bespectacled face is impassive. His dress is the presentable uniform of an English professor. Only his thatch of strawberry-blonde hair and a red tie hint at the colourful ideas that absorb his waking hours.

Within the film's tone, Miss Shepherd (Maggie Smith) is a comic foil, shaking up her well-heeled neighbourhood with her aromatic antics. Within the context of Bennett's social storytelling, she acts as a truth serum, antagonising all around her into revealing what lies beneath the polite veneer of civilisation. Within Bennett's life, she is a catalyst for self-development. Within her own right, she is a mystery wrapped in a glare encased in a van.

For Miss Shepherd is not a character that homelessness has made grovelling or grateful. She is imperious and suspicious, reacting to all acts of generosity with a sense of queenly entitlement. The liberal intellectual neighbourhood accepts her presence with artificial cheer thats turns to horror when she gets within smelling distance. Smith knows the shades of her character inside out. Her acidic reaction to her neighbours is a reliable device for diverting attempts to get to know her. Smith trades on surface ferocity telegraphing vulnerability only through eyes that peer out of her withered, battle-ready form.

Bennett becomes her protector while denying that he is motivated by kindness. He is otherwise preoccupied by talking to himself. Jennings plays dual Bennetts in a device that unfolds with quaint politeness. Divided beings need not signify psychopathology. Had *Fight Club* been concerned with the internal negotiations of a timid wordsmith there would have been no blood spilt – only ink.

Sub-plots involving Bennett's mother and a shady figure (Jim Broadbent) who has incriminating information on Miss Shepherd are slight and unwelcome distractions from the film's buddy movie core. Bennett and Shepherd are portrayed as solitary creatures who sense a kinship while avoiding closeness. Hytner makes parallels between Miss Shepherd's furtiveness and Bennett's closeted sexuality through structure rather than on-the-nail dialogue. As his observations about her life deepen so the writer emerges from his cautious shell. As he notes: "You don't put yourself in your writing, you write to find yourself." In this peculiar but intimate dance between he and the lady in the van the delicate symbiosis between a writer and their subject is given its dues. SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN



Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict

Directed by
LISA IMMORDINO VREELAND
Released
11 DECEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

This Guggenheim is ripe for a reappraisal.



ENJOYMENT.

A hoot from start to finish.



IN RETROSPECT.

Wonderfully warts and all.

ecause of her lack of beauty she was never going to make it as a siren," offers one bitchy (male) commentator when asked what made the late Peggy Guggenheim gravitate towards the accumulation of art. This outrageously entertaining, quick-fire film boasts the rat-a-tat rhythm and the lust for life of a screwball comedy, as it introduces us to a woman who rose above the sneering, and carved out a name for herself as a creative patron, voracious lover and bon vivant.

Lisa Immordino Vreeland follows the fascinating *Diana Vreeland: The Eye Has to Travel* with a well-spun, energetically edited yarn that's in part told by Peggy herself, after never-before-heard audio interviews were tantalisingly unearthed. Dubbed a 'mixture of the old-fashioned and the very, very modern', Guggenheim obligingly swings between prim politeness and pleasing frankness ("my book is all about fucking"), her delivery both slurring and sharp.

Born into privilege in 1898 but mired in misfortune (her father going down on the Titanic was sadly just the beginning), New Yorker Peggy refused to rest on her riches, or to resign herself to the role of tragedienne, instead becoming a self-confessed art addict. After being turned on to the avant-garde scene through her job in a NY bookstore, she befriended a number of notable artists in the 1920s – including Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp – as she decamped to Paris, and became a major influence on British thinking about modern art when she opened a gallery in London, showcasing the surrealists and putting on Kandinsky's first English exhibition.

Returning to Paris, Peggy saved a wealth of art from Nazi destruction in 1939, which she smuggled out disguised as household goods (this would form the nucleus of her collection, purchased for a mere \$40,000 and featuring works by Dali and Picasso). She also helped artists flee to America, notably Max Ernst who became her philandering husband. Later Peggy would be known for her financial support and encouragement of Jackson Pollock, the achievement of which she was most proud. Described as a 'pollinator', she formed a crucial link between the European and American modernist movements, bringing significant individuals and their work together.

Vreeland's vibrant film combines personal biography and art history, spitting out dazzling montages of paintings, exhibition posters, photographs and movie clips, interspersed with amusing anecdotes and scintillating verbal swipes from her subject. A varied assortment of interviewees offer their considered contributions – from biographer Jacqueline Bograd Weld, to Marina Abramović and Robert De Niro (whose artist parents were championed by Guggenheim) – while art historian John Richardson throws a few backhanded compliments Peggy's way.

We see how Peggy ploughed on despite routine sexist disparagement and the apparent hurdle of her looks (she opts to "guts it out with a funny face" after a botched nose job). Vreeland succeeds because she embraces the many facets of Peggy's personality: her insecurity and self-acknowledged cleverness, her flamboyance and notorious cheapness. It's a suitably colourful portrait of an art lover who defied the naysayers to make one hell of a mark. **EMMA SIMMONDS**



A Pixar debut boy talks about plucking up the courage to direct *The Good Dinosaur*.

novitiate in the rarified stable of directors who get to make a Pixar movie, Pete Sohn cut his teeth at the studio as maker of the delightful short feature, Partly Cloudy, which played at the top end of Pete Docter's whimsical 2009 film, Up. With The Good Dinosaur, he steps up to the plate for his feature debut, telling the story of a young dino named Arlo who is separated from his family and has to navigate his way home.

LWLIES: IS THE GOOD DINOSAUR PIXAR'S ANSWER TO THE CLASSIC AMERICAN WESTERN? Sohn: It's almost like Old Yeller. It's not a western, but it takes place in that frontier era. But, there's voice work by Sam Elliott in there, and that's a definite nod to cowboys of a certain time. The film stemmed from the evolution of the "what if..." question. What if herbivores evolved to become agrarian farmers? And would carnivores then become ranchers? There were routes and ideas where we had gunslingers and things like that. But I'd see it and think, I'm glad we're not doing that as it's just a parody

of a western. But the world as a place which is still untamed – that aspect was interesting. We definitely referenced a lot of movies that showcase landscape in a certain way: works by John Ford, George Stevens, David Lean and his great cinematographer Freddie Young.

YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT HOW YOUR PRODUCER, DENISE REAM, KEPT "OUTSIDE FORCES" AT BAY WHEN MAKING THE MOVIE. Well maybe outside forces is not the correct thing to say. But it was almost referring to my own fears as a filmmaker. I could take things personally and she'd find ways to shake me out of it. In terms of production, when we needed to get something started, she would come in and say, "No, no, no – give us a little bit more time before the beast comes in."

THE BEAST? Yes, the beast. The machine. Because money would be spent on things. It's like the monster that stands behind you with an abacus. More people come in, more money goes out. If you have a story problem, the producer judges where we're at, and if it's still in a tough place, she make sure we're not wasting any time or resource.

PIXAR MOVIES FEEL LIKE THESE PERFECT PRODUCTS WHERE DIRECTORS HAVE NEVER HAD TO COMPROMISE. IS THIS A MYTH? It is a myth. Every director I've talked to has a sequence which haunts them or something they could've done better. I'm a big fan of Pixar, even though I work for them, but I also try to get stories out of them about the old days, about the things they had to go through to get these films made. I ask them how happy they are with

their movies, and they always say that they're so happy, but... There's always a 'but'. And it's this thing, and that thing. But the process itself is devastating. It's purposefully devastating. You try a lot of things out, and you toss a lot of things out too. I say those words, but it requires a lot of effort to try an idea out in this medium.

DURING PRODUCTION, DID YOU GET BETTER AT GUESSING WHAT WAS GOING TO WORK AND WHAT WASN'T? I can't say I got better, but I got faster. I'm sure some of the other Pixar guys got better, but for me... I was scared. I didn't have all the confidence in the world jumping into this thing. But through the journey, I felt stronger. There would be this constant battle between your guts and your brains. When something doesn't work, your gut feels it, but you have to divertit to your brain to find out why. Then you'd try a new way, and your gut feels better. Always protect the gut. At that point, you learn to trust yourself. I know that's a trite thing to say, but that's the way I was able to build confidence.

HOW MUCH IS EACH PIXAR FILM THE PRODUCT OF THE ENTIRE COMPANY? We would have a screening and we would gather the guys and ask them for notes. Immediately, they would talk about what was working and what wasn't working. But, they would never insist on changes. They stay away far enough so they can be objective. There is a communal osmosis that happens. They give great advice and I take a lot of it. But it's never dictated. At the same time, when I watch the movie, all I see is the people who made it

The Good Dinosaur is released 27 November.



Brief Encounter (1945)

Directed by
DAVID LEAN
Starring
CELIA JOHNSON
TREVOR HOWARD
STANLEY HOLLOWAY
Released
6 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

It's Brief Encounter for god's sake.



ENJOYMENT.

Perfect parts include: the script, the lead performances, the steam trains, the music, the supporting performances, those accents, the bloody Refreshment Room, the end, the beginning, the middle.



IN RETROSPECT.

An irresistible romance with glorious old world values.v

Prief Encounter is a majestic locomotive that steams deservedly among the immortals of cinema. For as long as people yearn for the incompatible goals of stable monogamy and spontaneous romance, David Lean's black-and-white masterpiece will be as vital as tracks to the trains that roar across them.

The plot and themes hardly need retracing. Brief Encounter is a set text for any cinephile, homaged implicitly in Wong Kar Wai's In the Mood for Love, and explicitly in Todd Haynes' new film, Carol, which is bookended with the same scene that bookends Brief Encounter: two people that illicitly love one another sitting in silence before an acquaintance comes to shatter the moment with blithe yapping. Because the feelings of the silent couple cannot be expressed within the code of civilised exchanges, one of them gets up and leaves, but not before delivering a secret squeeze of the other's shoulder.

Apart from 'this film remains perfect and everyone should see it', what is worth saying about this film 70 years on? Laura (Celia Johnson) the housewife heroine, and Alec (Trevor Howard) the gallant doctor, both have cut-glass accents which dates the setting but not the drama. The purity of the storytelling is built to last. There is no deviation in Laura's anguished narrative from the chance meetings and the excited feelings they conjure, and then, the planned meetings and the invisible chasms they create in her family life.

The morality is pure by contrast with self-consciously modern relationship philosophies. Laura and Alec know that cheating on their spouses would

be wrong. Mutual comprehension of this fact informs the undertow of tension that grows in tandem with their initially polite feelings. If such a film were made today, Alec would be a rakish playboy who seduces Laura with his charismatic moral relativism. Laura's suffering would take the form of an existential crisis over whether fidelity is a realistic expectation. The nature of morality is not a question here. The issue is a juicier, more earnest one: what to do with overwhelming immoral urges?

So, *Brief Encounter* carries not just a justifiably swooned-over depiction of love that cannot be, but a depiction of decency that cannot be undone. We never see Alec's other half, but Laura's husband Fred (Cyril Raymond) is shown to be unflappable and kindly. Laura rallies herself into forced cheer for their interactions. It's no great leap to imagine her in days gone by and, perhaps days to come, buoyed by warm family comforts. There is no ambiguity in his conduct to muddy the definition of doing right and doing wrong by Fred and her kids.

The source of the muddying is her desire for the energy offered by a new man, a new love, a new raft of feelings, a new life. These are cravings that even the most blissfully domesticated among us occasional feel rising up in our most defiantly romantic thoughts. But romance is not the same as goodness. *Brief Encounter* holds this truth down in the ink of Noel Coward's worldly and wellmannered script. Romance and goodness are evoked with equal power and from these conflicting impulses, voluptuous demons spring eternal. SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN

#3

CHANTAL AKERMAN A Celebration

On Monday 5 October 2015, the world lost one its most remarkable film artists. The news of Chantal Akerman's death sent melancholic ructions through the film community at large, as many were forced to accept that her most recent work – the brilliant, brusingly intimate *No Home Movie* – was to exist furthermore as her untimely swansong. Some might say that Akerman was one of the great Belgian directors. They might even say she was one of the great female directors. They might even say she was one of the key innovators of a brand of fastidious, slow-moving art cinema which bridged a gap between the world of conceptual art and film. She was all of those things, but most of all she was one of the great directors, someone who knew how to use a camera to make

a statement and create poetry. The film she's most widely know for is 1975's Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles, a near four-hour feminist opus which mused on the lowly lot of the modern housewife while innovating as an example of objective cinematic portraiture. But she was never one to rest on her creative laurels, and that each film she made felt like starting from zero was inherent to the challenge. She made fiction films, documentaries, profiles of herself and others, TV serials, shorts, gallery exhibits, literary adaptations and even the odd musical. LWLies and MUBI want to celebrate Akerman and her work, so we'll be presenting two films – one screened live, the other streamed online – as part of our doubles series.

Love

Directed by
GASPAR NOÉ
Starring
AOMI MUYOCK
KARL GLUSMAN
KLARA KRISTIN
Released
20 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

French cinema's most notorious provocateur returns with an inevitable foray into the realm of 3D sex.



ENJOYMENT.

For better or worse, indulges in all the expected delights, but evinces a newfound sense of humor and humanity.



IN RETROSPECT.

Surprisingly tender, Love finds Noé finally having a little fun at his own expense.

irector Gaspar Noé's reputation has been built on one what one might generously deem the less dignified aspects of the human condition. If the Argentine-born filmmaker is by this point a "name" in international cinema, it's in the most literal sense, as a headline-generating, controversy-stoking star of his own conception. Having already pushed the boundaries of violence, misogyny, and drug abuse (among other delightful subjects) in such purposefully

provocative films as 1998's I Stand Alone, 2002's Irréversible and 2009's Enter the Void, it makes a certain kind of sense that Noé would not only one day arrive at a full-blown sex flick, but at a full-blown 3D sex flick. In light of such considerations, that Love – née Gaspar Noé's Love – fulfils all the titillating tenets of said genre is unsurprising; that it's as simultaneously tender, touching, and even tasteful as its title implies is, for this filmmaker, the most shocking development of all.

To be clear, Love retains many of the stylistic hallmarks that make Noé's filmmaking so frustrating; this time, however, these same gauche aesthetic flourishes are tempered by a genuine sense of humanity and, most importantly, a heretofore unacknowledged sense of humour. The seeming irony of Noé making a 3D porno called Love is lost on absolutely no one, least of all the director, who goes to great lengths to prove just how unironically he views this story. The narrative, therefore, is equal parts earnest and enervating, tracking in flashback the romantic and sexual passions of a young couple from the throes of a breakup to their early days as star-crossed lovers. We watch (and watch) as Murphy (Karl Glusman) and Electra (Aomi Muyock) make love with numerous people, in a variety of places and positions, the pair enjoying the strength of their youthful libidos even as their emotional bonds appear to grow evermore tenuous. Later, when Murphy turns a ménage à trois with their neighbour, Omi (Klara Kristin), into an ongoing sexual liaison, his infidelity results in an unexpected pregnancy and ill-equipped foray into parenthood.

If the plot sounds like bad daytime television, it is so by design – everything about the film seems to speak in the most base vocabulary possible. The performers – Glusman a working actor in his first significant role; Muyock and Kristin non-actors plucked by the director from a night club – while committed, seem as if they were selected as much for their

unpolished qualities as their willingness to engage in unsimulated sex. Their dialogue manages to transcend any language barriers by conveniently returning to the viewer to a universally pubescent perspective. Likewise, Noé's manner of visualising the film is, by his standards, rather conventional, shooting most of the expository scenes in medium-length two-shots, and the sex scenes in either static set-ups or from overhead angles emphasising the intimacy of the proceedings. For better or worse, few of the familiarly garish sequences or elaborately choreographed tracking shots of Noé's past work are in evidence here.

All of which begs the question of why Noé chose to shoot the film in 3D. His less demonstrative formal approach, coupled with the stereoscopic lensing, occasionally lends a pleasing depth to the image, exploited most expertly in a neon-lit club sequence and a number of near-hallucinatory scenes set outside the confines of the bedroom. But otherwise the technology does little to deepen the sensory effect of watching these actors' bodies communicate and commingle in uninhibited displays of eroticism. It may simply have been the most obvious way to subvert expectations, which, thankfully, Noé only rarely gives into - most memorably with an inevitable "shot" pointed right in the face of the audience - instead opting to stress the film's almost playfully self-conscious demeanour. The posters of controversial films (Salò, The Birth of a Nation) decorating Murphy's bedroom walls, for example, are downright subtle compared to when he and Omi decide to name their newborn son (wait for it...) Gaspar, And if that's not enough the director himself shows up as Electra's sleazy ex-boyfriend, joining in on the fun with a silhouetted sex scene all of his own. Whether you find these flourishes indulgent or ingratiating will likely come down to your patience for Noé and his self-styled persona. At the very least it's nice to see him finally having a little fun at his own expense. JORDAN CRONK







Gaspar Noé

The Buenos Aires-born, Paris-based provocateur sounds off on all things *Love*.

t seems like a happy coincidence (or maybe it was simply meant to be?) that *LWLies* and Gaspar Noé should come together to talk about *Love* – in the City of Love, no less – at a time when another deeply passionate, somewhat controversial romantic epic is vying for our attention. Not that Todd Haynes' *Carol* and Noé's 3D sex odyssey have all that much in common. On a crisp, sunny morning in September the writer/director shared his personal views on life, love and movies.

NOÉ ON LOVE

"Originally I had written a treatment under the title 'Danger', and I wanted to do it before Irréversible. I got together whatever money I had at the time, which was not a lot, and tried to shoot as much as I could. Then I ran into Vincent Cassel in a club and he said he and Monica [Bellucci] were free that summer, but he didn't realise how much full frontal nudity was in the script. The day before we started shooting Vincent called me and said they couldn't do the movie because the only thing they as a couple had left was their intimacy. Of course I had to respect their privacy, but we had the money and I was going to make a movie, so in one second I said, 'Let's make a rape revenge movie told backwards instead."

NOÉ ON LUST

"When I was 15 I remember seeing images of Sylvia Kristel in *Emmanuelle* and that had such a huge impact on me. I became obsessed with Sylvia Kristel, I wanted one day to date a girl who looked like her. And then I saw Maud Adams in *Octopussy*. I saw that movie like six times, not because I care about James Bond – for me he was invisible – I just thought Maud Adams was so damn sexy."

NOÉ ON SEX

"In real life when you're having sex you're not watching the genitals, you're watching the mouth or the neck of the other person. I shot *Love* in this way, with these kinds of close-ups, because that's how we remember our formative sexual experiences."

NOÉ ON PORNOGRAPHY

"No one ever says 'I love you' in porn. You never see people kissing or a woman getting pregnant or having periods – things that happen in real life. I enjoyed watching porn movies for many years but one day suddenly I stopped. I used to like watching VHS and porn movies in theatres but now pornography is all on the internet and to me the computer is the least arousing thing. I grew up with '70s pornography which had more narrative

and the girls had normal boobs and they had pubic hair. It was great. French pornography was maybe a bit bourgeois, but it was closer to real life. When it comes to my movie I really wanted to portray a true love story so I needed to include full frontal nudity. It's a return the erotic cinema of the '70s which sadly doesn't exist anymore."

NOÉ ON PEOPLE

"In France people are far more concerned with sex than money. It's a status thing. When you go to an American film festival, people ask you how much it cost, how much did it gross, whereas in France it's all about who fucking who."

NOÉ ON 3D

"About three few years ago they started selling 3D home video cameras that you could link to your TV at home. It was around the time that my mother got very sick and before she died I filmed her a lot in 3D. When I watched the images back it was very shocking, it felt like she was in the box, like the TV had become a casket. There was something creepy but very touching about those images. It was then I knew I wanted to make a movie in 3D. And I wanted to shoot a cumshot because I thought it would be funny in 3D."

NOÉ ON CRITICISM

"Each time I get a bad review I google the name of the writer. I had an awful review in *Variety*, like two pages of insults, and I googled his name and saw a photo of him, with his asexual face and a bowtie... That's exactly the kind of guy I would never talk to. I noticed the older male critics seem to dislike this movie a lot more than the female critics. I don't know why, maybe the male reviewers think they're competing with the young strong dick of the male character."

NOÉ ON CREATIVITY

"I recently got this book about psychosis, which describes all the kinds of psychosis a person can have. I know that I can be paranoid, which is why I don't like smoking marijuana, because it makes you paranoid, but I discovered that my creative pattern is mostly manic obsessive. That seems to be the best way to describe my approach to making movies, because when I commit to script or a project I very quickly become obsessed. I want to make a movie about the horror of religion, which will maybe be like Pasolini's Salò, so right now I'm obsessed with that idea."



The Forbidden Room

Directed by
GUY MADDIN
Starring
UDO KIER
MATHIEU AMALRIC
ARIANE LABED
Released
11 DECEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

You know what you're in for with Guy Maddin. The question is how crazy will it be.



ENJOYMENT.

This is a whole bathtub full of crazy. In a good way.



IN RETROSPECT.

A cinematic cleansing like no other.

ello, I'm Marv," a white-haired, bespectacled man (Louis Negin) says direct to camera, his half-open robe hanging at a louche angle over his otherwise naked body, near the beginning of Guy Maddin and Evan Johnson's The Forbidden Room. "Today we're going to discuss baths." They are worth discussing. For as we lie in the bathtub, there is a collision of grime and cleanliness, of expiatory purification and bare-assed sexuality. The natural stench of our body's odours and emissions is gradually wiped by the headily exotic perfume of the soap. As we wash away the accrued film of smut and filth, we melt in the moist warmth, our mind drifts, and we are remade, becoming a refreshed double of our dirtier selves, ready to face the world, or perhaps even a lover - who, if we are lucky, has similarly washed, in preparation to get sweaty and soiled all over again.

The Forbidden Room is not really about baths – but still, as Marv's lessons (and dirty jokes) leak into the film's fluid textures and watery depths, viewers are likely to find themselves fully immersed in all the Maddin madness. If the opening credits intermix old-world title sequences from multiple stories though unstable celluloid-like media that burn, melt and fray around the edges, all this is a fitting prelude to the mind-bending labyrinth of impossibly interpolated tales and diabolical digressions that follows.

The painted backdrops, the vaseline-smeared lenses, the tinted images, the overwrought gestural performances, the hyperbolic score, the endless succession of sensationalist, bizarre and often lewd intertitles – these retro stylings have become a signature of Maddin's work, and here they are the gooey glue that beautifully, if barely, holds together his free associations. It is as though random episodes from different 1930s serial melodramas were sent swirling together down the same plughole, in a descending spiral of dizzyingly lost connections and bent plumbing – like Wojciech Has' *The Saragossa Manuscript* reinvented as hornily fetishistic hallucination by someone who has gone heavy on the bath salts.

It is not so much that there is no narrative – on the contrary, there is a surfeit of stories here, each unnervingly odd in its own right and all linked together by a desultory logic that belongs to a dream – or at least to steamy, sudsy reverie. In the middle of one story about seamen "TRAPPED!" (as a hyperbolic intertitle has it) in their submarine "the SS Plunger" and forced to survive off the pockets of oxygen in their flapjacks, the mysterious lumberjack Cesare (Roy Dupuis) mysteriously drops in, and tells the desperate crew, in search of their missing captain, the parallel story of his own quest to rescue his beloved Margot (Clara Furey) from her wild abductors the Red Wolves. Things eccentrically and concentrically spiral from there.

The result is certainly full of "boggling puzzlements", but also of ideas and invention, of errant eros and unfathomable (if not strictly bottomless) hilarity. So sit back, unwind, and lose yourself to this transglobal tubthumping oneiroepic bathtime of the psyche – for some good, if questionably clean, fun. ANTON BITEL



Radiator

Directed by
TOM BROWNE
Starring
DANIEL CERQUEIRA
JULIA FORD
RICHARD JOHNSON
Released
27 NOVEMBER



ANTICIPATION.

It's been a year since the film debuted, but it's still very well liked.



ENJOYMENT.

A conscientiously unsentimental tale of a man drifting away from his parents.



IN RETROSPECT.

A superior Brit debut.

ad, in some wackadoo alternative universe, Yasujiro Ozu directed a remake of Withnail & I, it might have looked a tiny bit like this impressive autobiographical debut feature from Tom Browne. Radiator sees Daniel (Daniel Cerqueira), a mild-mannered teacher from London, having to briefly decamp to Penrith to stay over with his daffy, screw-loose parents. Father Leonard (Richard Johnson) stubbornly barks order from a grubby sofa and wallows in a pit of his own filth. Meanwhile his doting doormat wife, Maria (Gemma Jones), cheerily tends to his every eccentric whim. What Daniel quickly discovers is that they are a couple out of time, and their relationship has calcified into a destructive regime of desperate pacification. Time expended on retaining some small semblance of happiness has meant that domestic chores have fallen by the wayside, and the pair's ramshackle cottage is starting to resemble a junkie's squat. Rats are the only living guests, entering through holes in the floorboards which the couple don't want to block up as it helps keep out the damp.

There's no real narrative here, just a number of extended scenes in which the bemused and passive Daniel attempts to ease his parents towards the end of their lives without rocking the boat too much. He sees no point in enforcing change, unlike when he is able to gently condition pre-teens when teaching them to read. It's interesting that he chooses not to save them, refusing to tidy up their hovel despite complaints from the neighbours and a general hindrance of their personal wellbeing. He wants them to live how they've evidently enjoyed living,

and if he can accompany them for a while through their twilight years, then so be it. What he does see, however, is the beastly side to his father which has possibly been exacerbated by the onset of dementia. Though there are vague hints that their relationship was at one time more equal, Leonard now treats Maria as his slave. And she relents. His own physical helplessness has meant that she has had to cut off all ties with friends, yet she still executes his every order with a smile and a skip in her step.

Browne opts for very dark observational humour rather than cheapening the material with comic setpieces and obvious jokes. There's something amusing about Leonard moaning that Maria has accidentally bought straws with "corrugated necks", a description which counterpoints his education and worldliness against the utter pettiness of the complaint. Though sensitive to a fault, the film does touch on all the bases you expect it to, including the dour conclusion it eventually arrives at. Plus, you do feel that Browne has created two remarkable characters in Leonard and Maria, and maybe didn't have anything left in the tank to do anything too interesting for well-meaning dullard Daniel. He drifts through the film as a sad sack observer, entirely aware of the futility of the situation but thinking fast to try and make the best out of it. Yet as an allegory for the ageing process, the destruction of the body and a natural drift towards loneliness in later life, it's a touching and well mounted work. Browne is not afraid to hold on to a take, and he never wallows on suffering as a means to force undue drama. He sometimes bravely opts to hide the Big Moments between edits. DAVID JENKINS

The Danish Girl

Directed by
TOM HOOPER
Starring
EDDIE REDMAYNE
ALICIA VIKANDER
AMBER HEARD
Released

1 JANUARY, 2016



ANTICIPATION.

They don't call him Tom "The Antichrist" Hooper for nothing, but Vikander demands our attention.



ENJOYMENT.

Hooper breaks through in spite of himself, telling a beautifully nuanced and humane story of love, loss, and gender identity.



IN RETROSPECT.

Redmayne and Vikander, along with the film's dusky flourishes, allow The Danish Girl to reach beyond the awards it was designed to win.

he Danish Girl may play fast and loose with most of the facts, but Tom Hooper's heavily fictionalised and uncharacteristically watchable film about Einar Wegener — one of the first people to undergo male to female sex reassignment surgery — is

so powerful because it preserves the crucial truth that its protagonist was neither a guinea pig nor a martyr.

Based on David Ebershoff's novel of the same name, which itself was a liberally creative account of Wegener's life, *The Danish Girl* has all the historical accuracy of a Xerox. But rather than underline the obvious courage required in Wegener's role as a medical pioneer, Hooper foregrounds the conviction required for Elbe to be a trans woman long before there was a word for it. This isn't a film about an activist, but rather one about a marriage, a man, and the woman he would leave behind in order to become the woman he was born to be. It may look like a traditional awards season biopic, but looks can be deceiving.

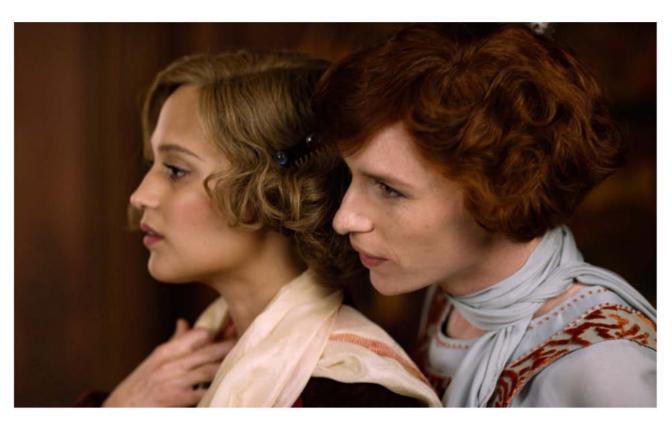
Shot with the sensitivity of a Sofia Coppola movie and the scale of a prestige picture, The Danish Girl begins in the beautiful blue-gray wonderland of 1920s Copenhagen, where Einar Wegener and his wife Gerda (Alicia Vikander) are the hippest couple in town. He's a successful painter, fixated on perfecting a landscape of his childhood. She's an artist as well, albeit a much less famous one, her career hobbled by misogyny. Young, beautiful, and constantly touching each other, Einar and Gerda aren't merely a normal couple - their love is storybook, their marriage like the epilogue of a fairy tale. And then, one fateful evening, Gerda asks Einar to hold the hem of a lace dress against his leg so that she can finish a portrait of their absent friend, ballet dancer Oola Paulson (Amber Heard). For Einar, it's like a veil has been lifted.

It isn't long before Gerda is giddily slathering Einar in makeup so that he can attend a party with her in the guise of a cousin named Lile Elbe (Redmayne's gamine features make Elbe's appearance all the more convincing). It's all good fun for her, but the flint in Einar's eyes betray the look of someone feeling the first nervous stirrings of an awakening.

The film may be set nearly 100 years ago, but it's pitched towards audiences of the present. Lucinda Coxon's script adamantly refuses to saddle its characters with outmoded notions of trans identity or demean Lili by having her doubt her conviction - even Einar's childhood friend Hans Axgil (Matthias Schoenaerts), who might seem narratively predisposed towards a certain strain of bigotry, does everything in his power to make Lili feel welcome in the world. Likewise, Gerda's understandable confusion is never allowed to rot into spite, and the wounded love that emanates from Vikander's stoic performance clarifies this as a portrait of sacrifice and surrender rather than one of social justice. The soft beauty of Hooper's aesthetic, along with Alexandre Desplat's stirring score, further help to orient the film towards the complex humanity of the queer experience rather than the inhumanity that so often crops up in response to it.

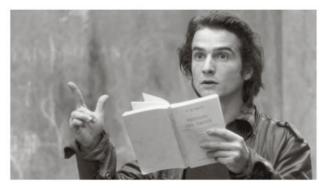
If none of this sounds like the stuff of a movie by Tom "I have a voice!" Hooper, perhaps the highest praise owed to The Danish Girl is that - save for a few noxious fisheye shots in the first act - its direction often feels anonymous. Still, Oscar bait is the only way that Hooper knows how to catch a fish, and his thirst for melodrama often seems frustrated by Coxon's delicate writing and Redmayne's brilliantly full-fleshed transformation. The result of that clash is a film that feels like an exquisite poem written entirely in caps lock, each nuanced moment punctuated with a torrent of tears (either Redmayne or Vikander is crying in almost every scene). But Hooper saves himself with an emotionally measured anti-climax, cementing The Danish Girl as a film that experiences a transition of its own: what begins as a story about holding on ultimately resolves as a story about letting go. DAVID EHRLICH













The Jacques Rivette Collection

Directed by JACQUES RIVETTE	1971-81
Starring JEAN-PIERRE LÉAUD	Released 30 NOV
BULLE OGIER MICHAEL LONSDALE	Blu-ray

n the new US Blu-ray edition of Jacques Rivette's 1971 cinematic monolith, Out 1, the distributors have included the line, "The Holy Grail of modern French cinema" on the box cover. For once, such sentiment cannot be discounted as hyperbole - this really is a movie that has, for too long, been nearly impossible to see. That might, in part, be down to its gigantic runtime of 12 hours and 55 minutes spread over eight episodes. Or, that the only print with English subtitles had recently gone walkies. But now the veil finally drops and we all have the opportunity to watch this peculiar, rambling masterwork from a true-blue visionary of cinema. The film is loosely inspired by Honoré de Balzac's compendium of short stories, 'History of the Thirteen,' about a secret society whose work is occasionally interrupted by human desire. Out 1 follows two experimental theatre troupes as they rehearse plays by Aeschylus - Seven Against Thebes and Prometheus Bound. Jean-Pierre Léaud and Juliet Berto lurk eccentrically in the backdrop as their attempts to uncover a conspiracy slowly begin to dovetail with clandestine activities of the troupes. It is one of the great films about the combustible nature of revolutionary movements, and it captures the intense melancholy and sense of political capitulation that arrived after the events of May'68. The very act of watching a film involves a brief communion of souls who venture together into a new world and then, when the clock runs down, are pulled back into grim reality, and Out 1 much like Rivette's 1974 feature Celine and Julie Go Boating - symbolically encapsulates that very act. This essential box set also includes 1976's Duelle, 1976's Noroît/and 1981's Merry-Go-Round, which help to make this one of the greatest home entertainment releases ever bundled together. **DAVID JENKINS**

The Quiet Man

Directed by JOHN FORD	1952
Starring JOHN WAYNE	Released 23 NOV
MAUREEN O'HARA VICTOR MCLAG'EN	Blu-ray

here are those who think that John Ford's occasional cinematic forays outside of the USA resulted in heavily romanticised depictions of far-flung locales which muted even a light concession to realism in favour of embracing vulgar stereotypes. Looking on at the male voice choirs that crop up in his deserving 1941 Oscar-winner, How Green Was My Valley, it's hard to argue against that observation. Yet this particular rendering of foreign cultures doesn't preclude the films from being heart-racing marvels on their own terms. See also 1952's roistering pastoral, The Quiet Man, in which John Wayne's disgraced prizefighter, Sean Thornton, returns home to his Irish hometown after an exile in America to ingratiate himself once more into the quaint ebbs and flows of rural life. He quickly falls in love with Maureen O'Hara's flame-haired siren, Mary Kate, but also begins a petty turf war with her brother, Red (Victor McLaglen), which prevents him from earning the dowry he needs to wed Red's sister. Winton Hoch's cinematography pushes colour saturation levels to their outer limits, with the shamrock green of the fields and grasslands emphasising the plush, unspoiled idyll of the village and its surroundings. This is, quite possibly, one of the most expressive colour films of the '50s, its phosphorescent glow, enhanced by this new Blu-ray edition no end. Though, tonally, the The Quiet Man is played for salty guffaws (some of which definitely don't concur with modern conceptions of political correctness), the film is in essence a plea for peaceable co-existence, a critique of baseless, smalltown territorial grudges, and a request that cultural outsiders are treated as equals, not as aliens. This Masters of Cinema edition features a making-of documentary about the film as well as a newly-commissioned video essay by John Ford expert, Tag Gallagher. DAVID JENKINS









Day of the Outlaw

Directed by ANDRÉ DE TOTH	1959
Starring ROBERT RYAN	Released 7 DEC
BURL IVES TINA LOUISE	Blu-ray

here's a scene near the front end of André de Toth's snowbound western, Day of the Outlaw, in which the man who is later revealed as the film's hero, Blaise Starrett (Robert Ryan), sits quietly at a table. There are other people in the room - his soon-to-be soused riding partner (Nehemiah Persoff) and other hangers on, as well as Helen Crane (Tina Louise), the gorgeous wife of Blaise's enemy, Hal. As people talk among themselves, Ryan just sits and looks down at the table, his eyes locked on the wood, signalling to all around him that he has nothing to say to them, and that he's (not-so) politely waiting for them to get the hell out of the room. They eventually excuse themselves, and he then naturally segues into a conversation with Helen about plans that may result in the death of her husband. In the scheme of things, this is a very small stylistic touch, but it's the first of many examples which show how director de Toth capitalises on the intense, rugged qualities of his leading man. The film as a whole displays a gratifying nasty streak, existing as a seedy bridge between the classical westerns of the '30s and '40s with their clean-cut defenders of the peace and soft conservative agendas, and the and unfettered violence of the '70s and '80s ushered in by the likes of Sam Peckinpah and Sergio Leone. Blaise has to curb his violent streak when a gang of bank-robbers descend up on the tiny town of Bitters, Wyoming. Suddenly, the anger directed at his petty land vendettas has been refocused on to these licentious sons of bitches, led by charismatic, bearded bloater, Burl Ives. This new Blu-ray release by Masters of Cinema salvages the reputation of this prickly B-movie which got lost between between eras and sensibilities. DAVID JENKINS

All My Good Countrymen

Directed by VOJTECH JASNÝ	1969
Starring VLASTIMIL BRODSKÝ RADOSLAV BRZOBOHATÝ VLADIMÍR MENSÍK	Released 23 NOV
	DVD

aughter in the face of political ignominy is a broad conceit adopted ■ by numerous members of the so-called "Czech New Wave", as seen in films like Milos Forman's 1967 satire of civic authority, The Firemen's Ball, and Vera Chytilová's kaleidoscopic howl of free-form anarchofeminism, Daisies, from 1966. Vojtech Jasný aggressively bittersweet All My Good Countrymen was produced during the "Prague Spring" of 1968 - the months preceding the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia - and charts the seismic shifts in agrarian farming practices which were foisted upon a people who were happy with the old ways. From the off, it's clear that, despite their faults and foibles, Jasný has a profound respect for the working classes of his country, celebrating their lifestyle, their culture, their protest strategies, the ways they engage in local politics, and seldom emphasising a clichéd earthy grotesqueness for comic effect. Or, conversely, he doesn't frame their travails as purely sentimental. These are people who are funny, who understand humour. They are not there to be laughed at. It may seem like stating the obvious, but it's rare to see such sincere empathy in cinema. Interwoven slice-of-life tragedies and traumas make up much of the film's opening act, many of which are dashed with a mordent, almost Python-esque colloquial humour (a scene in a butcher's shop is laugh out loud hilarious, and deadly simple). Frantisek (Radoslav Brzobohatý) emerges in the film's second half as its stoic hero, standing firm against party agitators trying to coerce the farming community into signing over their land for the collective good. The film manages to compress all the breadth and scope of a TV serial into a sub-two hour runtime, revealing itself as one of Second Run DVD's finest and most user-friendly releases. DAVID JENKINS









Speedy

Directed by TED WILDE Starring HAROLD LLOYD ANN CHRISTY BERT WOODRUFF 1928 Released 8 DEC DVD & Blu-ray

■ arold Lloyd's final silent feature before he resigned to the pressures of the sound era, *Speedy* may not be capped with a sequence as epoch-defining as the clock climax from Safety Last!, but it endures as the bespectacled gagman's most coherent and consistently creative piece of work, and perhaps also his most forward-thinking. "Jane Dillon, in love with life, her gran-daddy, and someone else." So reads an early intertitle in a silent film that has a ton of fun with them throughout (Speedy is strangely quotable for a silent film). Jane's gran-daddy happens to be the owner of the last horse-drawn streetcar in the city, a business that he's constantly fighting to protect against the business bluster of some railroad folks who want to run their tracks straight through his turf. Her "someone else" is our hapless (if aptly named) hero, Harold "Speedy" Swift, a soda jerk who's more interested in the score of the Yankees game than he is in serving his customers. As he tells Jane: "Why worry about losing a job on Saturday when we can go to Coney Island on Sunday?" And go to Coney Island they do, in an extended sequence that offers sights on par with those in Paul Fejos' Lonesome, and paves the way for a film that inadvertently doubles as a medium for channelling the ghost of a great city (a major cameo from Babe Ruth is the cherry on top). While not all of the individual gags are home runs, Speedy - true to its name - achieves a rare velocity of sanguine comic energy, which ultimately erupts into a multiborough chase sequence as hectic and intense as anything in the Fast & Furious films. Criterion's essential new edition of the film, complete with an audio commentary by Film Forum programmer Bruce Goldstein and a bevy of Lloyd's home videos, is just the ticket to bring Speedy into the 21st century. DAVID EHRLICH

Ikiru

Directed by AKIRA KUROSAWA	1952
Starring TAKASHI SHIMURA	Released 23 NOV
NOBUO KANEKO SHIN'ICHI HIMORI	Blu-ray

ife is brief, fall in love, maidens, before the crimson bloom fades from your lips." Simply put - and Ikiru is simplicity itself - no other film has so vividly articulated the essence of what it means to be alive, and it's likely that no other film ever will. One of two features that Akira Kurosawa made between Rashomon and Seven Samurai, this potentially maudlin melodrama about a bureaucrat who learns that he has terminal stomach cancer is worth the legion of sentimental knockoffs it continues to inspire. Takashi Shimura, the only actor whose importance to Kurosawa's legend is on par with that of Toshirô Mifune, stars as human cog Kanji Watanabe, a man whose life is as hollowed out as the face he makes upon learning his grim prognosis. Plagued by middle-class ennui at a time when Japan was struggling to find a renewed sense of purpose, Watanabe could easily have been reduced to a cheap cipher for his country's postwar malaise if not for the ineffable humanity that Shimura grants his character, or the ingenious narrative structure that allows us to appreciate it - much of the film takes place after Watanabe's death, allowing us to discover the truth of his final days in tandem with those drunkenly mourning at his wake. Told via small gestures and universally accessible symbolism - one indelible scene finds a crowd of young people singing "Happy Birthday" to a girl in her prime, their voices inadvertently scoring the first strains of Watanabe's reawakening – *Ikiru* acquires an unparalleled power because it's as honest in its despair as it is in its transcendence. Life may be short and indifferent to our suffering, but that's no excuse not to live it well and leave a piece of yourself behind. A staple of Criterion's DVD lineup for years, *Ikiru* is long overdue on Blu-ray, and this HD edition is nothing if not a good opportunity to see things just a little bit clearer. DAVID EHRLICH









Wake Up and Kill

Directed by CARLO LIZZANI	1966
Starring ROBERT HOFFMANN	Released 24 NOV
GIAN MARIA VOLONTÉ CLAUDIO CAMASO	Blu-ray & DVD

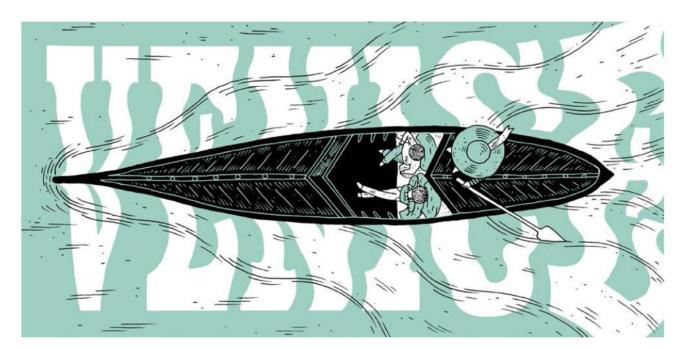
he Black Mass of '60s-era Milan, Carlo Lizzani's schlocky truecrime saga about doomed gangster Luciano Lutring is hardly seen as a genre classic (or at all), but the good folk over at Arrow Video saw something in this unpolished gem, and have rescued it from the brink of oblivion with this rather lavish special edition. Most notable for its relatively subtle Ennio Morricone score (one of sixteen he wrote in 1966), the rough and rambunctious Wake Up and Kill is built around an anti-hero so unlikable he makes Whitey Bulger look like Donnie Brasco. As played by Austrian actor Robert Hoffman, Lutring is an unrepentant sociopath who's addicted to a life of crime. Lizzani's film is sparked by Lutring's encounter with a nightclub singer named Yvonne (Lisa Gastoni), their meeting staged against a raw sequence in which Lutring doesn't woo the girl so much as claim her. Their relationship is abusive from the start, and soon metastasises into marriage. Lizzani has a gift for being succinct, and requires only one perfectly violent gesture to illustrate the rotten dynamic between these mismatched lovers (Lutring, who can't resist the allure of any public jewel case, ends an argument with Yvonne by smashing her head through one and stealing the valuables inside). As Yvonne defects to the police in a futile attempt to save her husband, the film begins to anticipate the existential brutality that Shôhei Imamura would bottle in 1979's Vengeance is Mine. Lizzani's story can hardly hang together, but his tactile camerawork sustains his subject's terminal velocity. But speed is the name of the game - as Lutring tells his wife: "Better to drive fast than end up in jail." Later, she'll echo her reply to the fuzz: "Better to end up in jail than in the cemetery." Some lives just aren't meant to end well. DAVID EHRLICH

Je T'Aime, Je T'Aime

Directed by ALAIN RESNAIS	1968
Starring CLAUDE RICH OLGA GEORGES-PICOT ANOUK FERJAC	Released 10 NOV
	Blu-ray & DVD

ith time, the hurt of separation loses its real limits. With time, the desired body will soon disappear, and if the desiring body has already ceased to exist for the other, then what remains is a wound, disembodied." All too eager to escape the pain of his present, a man is lead inside a fleshy pink machine that resembles a brain (from the outside) and a womb (from the inside), undeterred by one scientist's admission that a previous trial had been conducted with a mouse, but its success had been impossible to determine since the rodent suffered no obvious harm. Fresh off a failed suicide attempt, the otherwise unremarkable Claude Ridder (Claude Rich) is intercepted by two men on the streets of Paris and coerced into joining them for a ride into the country. Alain Resnais' Je'Taime, Je'Taime, which has been screaming for this restoration since 1968, is above all a film about helplessness. Deceptively cold and clinical, but designed to thaw right on schedule, the film knows with Claude learns all too late: Love is known by the scars it leaves behind. His marriage has recently ended in tragedy, and he volunteers to become the first human to travel into the past. Lo-fi sci-fi of the highest order, this adventure in quantum hopscotch leans on jump-cuts to convey Claude's abrupt skips through time, the restlessly inventive Resnais continuing to obliterate narrative norms, exploring what cinema could do rather than simply remodelling what had already been done with it. Marrying form and function, Je'Taime, Je'Taime anticipates the likes of Inception and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind by using film grammar to depict a process of the human brain. "Who said that time heals all wounds? It would be better to say that time heals everything - except wounds." DAVID EHRLICH

Venice Film Festival



ischiare" is the Italian word "to express vocal disapproval". But the manner in which people do so (and by "people" we refer to a very small minority of critics at the Venice Film Festival) is with a rather less silvery "boo". Fischiare sounds pleasant and sibilant, like something you might do for compliments or a cooking technique involving snapping butter in a saucepan; "boo" is the noise of a rude baby. And yet the world's oldest Mostra del Cinema is famous for its booing, often due to the "wrong" films getting the treatment: Pierrot Le Fou, The Master, Under The Skin, Birth (Venice clearly does not heart Jonathan Glazer), to name a few. But I like those films. I'm not so much a fan of, say, To The Wonder, The Fountain or many of the lower-profile movies that don't make headlines. So do they deserve to be booed? Where we get a bit tangled is that our incredulity at the more egregiously "wrong" selections of this noisy little club tacitly condones those occasions when they get it "right". But what earthly reason is there to ever boo at a festival press screening, no matter how many people might share your loathing?

This was only my second Venice, and perhaps I was dazzled by the ice cream and the quality of the leather goods in 2014, but booing was big news this year. Festival director Alberto Barbera even addressed the highest-profile recipient, Luca Guadagnino's fun, starry A Bigger Splash, in an interview correctly surmising it was largely the Italian press that had led the charge, and calling it "a pity" and "stupid behaviour". And indeed, the reviews thereafter from non-Italian critics were almost uniformly strong. In fact they were so strong, and so many of them (mine included) mentioned the boos in the spirit of counter-attack, that it's not an enormously paranoid stretch to imagine some Machiavellian PR agent planting boo-ers to nudge the majority of us into greater positivity via indignance. Well, maybe it is a bit paranoid (the Guadagnino Truther movement is born?) but it illustrates that booing does have an effect, whether direct or indirect.

The thing is, these are press screenings. Typically neither the public nor the filmmakers are in attendance. Indeed, I've never been at any festival screening attended by the film's team that has been anything but warmly applauded. Cinephile cred be damned, if Venice had shown *Pixels* with Adam Sandler present, the whole auditorium would doubtless have been on its feet ovating. Basic politeness dictates that no one disrespects the filmmakers in their presence, but it also suggests the cravenness of boo culture. If you are really so uncontrollably incensed, what reason other than cowardice is there for not letting the filmmaker know directly?

Perhaps there is a less noble, and less than spontaneous impulse behind the phenomenon. During a lower-profile Venice screening, Oliver Hermanus' The Endless River, I saw it first hand. The movie was by no means great - it is considered to the point of being turgid, and a disappointment after his solid 2011 feature, Beauty. Still, it has merit enough to put it several degrees north of "incompetent." And yet, "Boo! Incompetenza! Boo!" exploded from a man diagonally in front of me as soon as the credits rolled. His demeanour thereafter? He was incredibly pleased with himself. His two friends flanking him, both in the same late-middleage bracket, clapped his shoulders admiringly while he straightened his jacket front, rumpled from the effort of bellowing his pre-scripted tirade of disapproval, with the satisfied air of the Big Dawg. The glimpse into that psychology was revealing. It suggested that booers don't boo because in some tiny, obscure way they believe they are improving the standard of cinema, or participating in constructive discourse. They boo to be the first voice in a quiet room. They boo to pollute the honest experience of their peers with their own unsolicited opinion. They boo - and this is the least for givable aspect of it all - to make all the work we've just witnessed up there on the screen, somehow be about them. Now if only there were a way to express vocal disapproval of them...

Toronto Film Festival



here's nothing better than when you sense that a film festival has consumed a city. And not in some crass blanket marketing campaign, like omnipresent, self-agrandising banners placed by a fascist dictator who is trying to force his brand down the collective gullet. But an ineffable sense that people are being turned on to this thing entirely of their own volition – that the take over is silently ideological. It gets under your skin. In my experience of the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival, the toughest screening to get into wasn't one of the hulking Hollywood behemoths such as Ridley Scott's *The Martian* or Jean-Marc Vallée's delightful *Demolition*. Nor was it some white hot indie property such as Ben Wheatley's feverishly anticipated JG Ballard adaptation, *High-Rise*, or the sensational return of French iconoclast Lucile Hadzihalilovic with her mind-melting *Evolution*. It was, in fact, a programme of experimental short films filed under a strand named Wavelengths, signalling works which playfully stray from a path of broad mainstream acceptability.

The compendium was called Fire In the Brain, and the modestly sized Jackman Hall – a venue attached to the Art Gallery of Ontario – had queues spewing from its doors and around the block. It's hard to think of an instance where a so many revellers had been left disappointed as their desire to consume a set of six hard experimental short works (two in 3D!) had been denied to them. Watching films like these – at festivals or otherwise – often comes with the expectation that, as a viewer, you'll have plenty of room to stretch out, use spare seats for bags, coats, walking sticks and maybe even a chance to sit near an exit if the quality turns out to be questionable. But this was standing room only. The air was hot. The directors even made a few jokes before their oblique films unspooled. Perhaps in another context, these films would've come and gone, entered into the mind and then evaporated. Such is the tragic symptom of festival film cramming, where you can barely remember what you saw just hours

previously. But this event was memorable because of the atmosphere, a palpable sense of excitement, that this was a happening, a party, not merely a chance for cultural betterment.

Everyone sat in total silence as a sign of respect for these films. The awe-inspiring first short was the recently unearthed 3D Movie by the famed experimental filmmaker Paul Sharits, which employed constellations of visual white noise to transport the viewer into some kind of cosmic reverie. It offered the same brain-embalming effect as the "trip" finale to Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey, and then some. Charlotte Pryce's three minute stunner, Prima Materia, presented microscopic particles at play, while local boy Blake Williams' frisky Something Horizontal astutely triangulated shots of banal domestic interiors, German Expressionist shadows and angular anaglyph stylisation.

One of the things to mention which highlights a community galvanised through film is the mad cat-calls which arrive during the pre-film fesival idents. A lenghty advert thanking the festival volunteers (and there were lots of them) would, without fail, result in a large round of applause. Following that, a notification about film piracy causes the entire audience to burst out with "Arrrr!" pirate noises. Not just a single crank looking to start up a craze, the entire god-damn room. Emphasising this point about a civic desire to participate in cultural activities may seem like it's actually a criticism of other, lesser festivals, and if it is, it's entirely propagated from subjective experience. But then this gut feeling is 99 per cent of what makes a film festival special - for audiences and filmmakers both. At time of writing, Toronto's local baseball team, the Blue Jays, are riding high. Some noted that it's only because they're doing really well that the entire city has developed Blue Jay fever once more and continue to flock to Rogers Stadium to see them play. If that maths can be transferred over to TIFF, you'd have to deduce that it, too, is in the midst of a gigantic winning streak

Cocktail

- DIRECTED BY -

- STARRING -

Roger Donaldson

Tom Cruise Elisabeth Shue Bryan Brown

- TRAILERS -

- CHERRYPICK -

Divorce by Marriage,
Only in Detroit!, Being
John McEnroe, The Race
For Hitler's Brother

"I make things that juice and froth. The pink squirrel... The three-toed sloth..." TOM CRUSE

When he pours, he reigns.

To be the pours, he reigns.

- TAGLINE -

'They thought he was good, they were wrong... he was the best!' - RELEASED -

1988

he neighbourhood boozer is dead. We killed it. Us, who read and write uppity, boutique fanzines like this. Our foul toddlers, triple-cooked chips, Wi-Fi atomisation and twee, bunting-laden cheese nights have driven out such rickety, bothersome throwbacks as saturation football coverage, frowzy barmaids, cut-price lager and community spirit. The pool table is replaced by a bespoke Jenga pit. The jukebox makes way for an artisanal mustard cart. The dartboard remains, but it is behind glass.

Yet for all the current talk of gentrification, let us remember it was ever thus. In the '80s, hipsters were called 'Yuppies'. They too were coffee-obsessed swine in outsize glasses and menu haircuts, wafting from one exclusive hotspot to the next on self-replicating waves of empty math-pop, cocksurety and societal indifference. Theirs was a world in which form – be it high-concept blockbusters, flagrantly anonymous yacht-rock or computerised dating – was inseparable from content. It didn't matter what you did, only how improbably, modishly and showily you did it.

Unlike their modern-day counterparts, '80s movie execs occasionally betrayed a dim scintilla of shame over their money-grubbing delirium. It was a warped, vainglorious shame, to be sure. It nakedly pandered to their conception of Working Audience Joe Average: pluck a blue-jean jag-off out of a Bon Jovi song, give him a random, meaningless job, flagellate and mythologise the worthless fucker within an inch of his pointlessly noble life, then get back to blowing coke with transsexual Aspen snow-bunnies and verbally abusing your room-service waiter. The decade was awash with mulletty martyrs and denim gods. Patrick Swayze achieved zen-hayseed nirvana as a shitkicking bouncer in *Roadhouse*, while John Travolta loved beers and steers in mechanical-bull-riding mantasia *Urban Cowboy*. These men were not kings, yet royalty walked among them.

For a prince without banner ruled this age. With his impoverished

immigrant roots, rapacious eyes and a smile constrained only by the curvature of the Earth, Thomas Cruise Mapother IV attained suzerainty over a sub-category of films then being promoted into a full-blown genre: 'Working Class Schmoes Being Good and Flashy at Stuff Nobody Gives a Shit About.' Playing pool like a screaming peacock in *The Colour of Money*. Doing madballs racecar donuts in *Days of Thunder*. Flying wicked-cool jet-fighters during peacetime in *Top Gun*. Cruise could elevate any menial job or mindless pastime or teenage wet-dream into a smash hit fist-pumper. But it is 1988's *Cocktail* – which, unfathomably, is based on A Proper Book – that crowned his eternal regency. In this one, he's a barman. Yes, a barman.

Despite arriving into Manhattan armed with killer looks, the lease to his uncle's Hell's Kitchen bar – O'Shatterty's – and a righteous Napoleo-Reaganomic zeal to further himself for furtherance's sake, the Cruiser somehow finds himself slinging lowly suds in Ozzie 'negative rationalist' Bryan Brown's mid-town drinkatorium. But whaddya know – turns out he's the splashiest darn barman who ever put on an apron! Soon he and Bry-Bro are wowing the Big Apple's elite with non-sexual behind-the-bar rutting that sees them easing translucent liquids into each other's glistening receptacles and bickering over each other's 'tips'. And so it is in a voice soaked with innuendo, syphilis and greed that Brown beseechingly warns against young Tom's breakaway plan to impregnate every shopping-mall in the land with his hideously prescient burgers'n'brewskis franchise outlet Cocktails & Dreams. But he is too late.

Because ambition. Because us. Not them. The local pub has always been dying. Because no-one can ever say 'no'. Not to the three-beef chilituna mega-deal. Not to the three-for-five pomegranate shooters. Not to the Jenga pit, to Tom Cruise or to ourselves. Not even to cheese night. Because if *Cocktail* teaches us anything, it's that we're all of us heels. Yes we are



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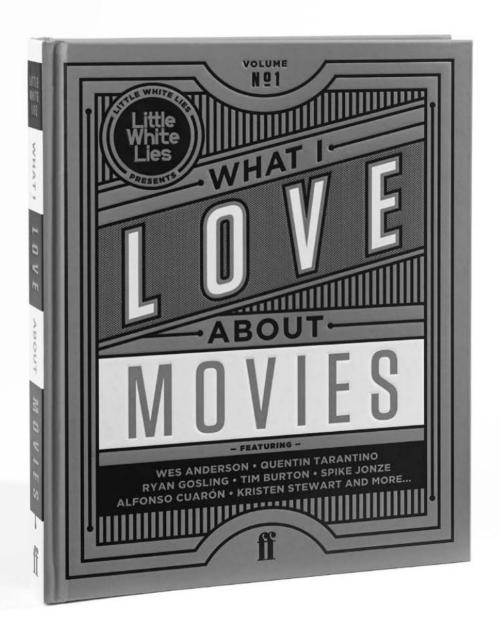
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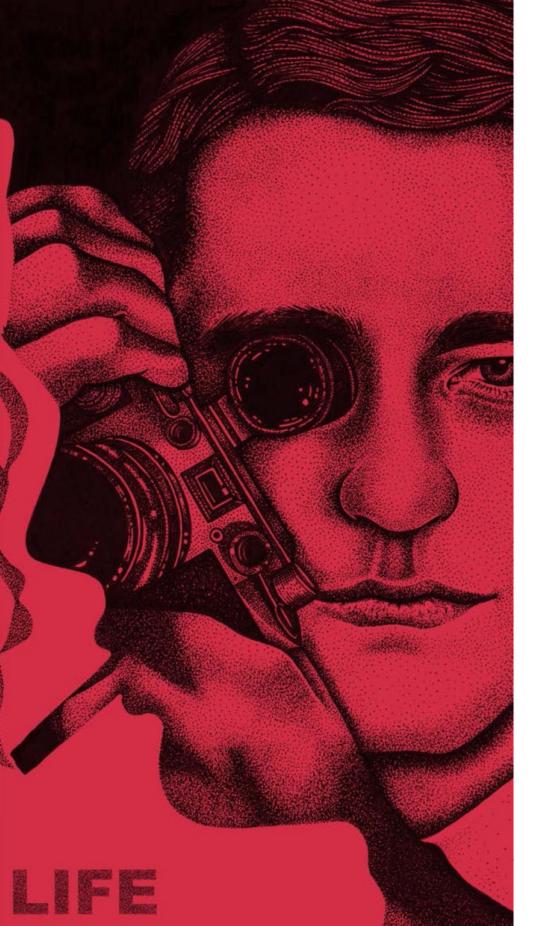
FILM BOOK OF 2014

The Sunday Times

Your doctor says. Smoking Hills"



Words, pictures, thanks... Mark Asch, Abbey Bender, Anton Bitel, Whooli Chen, Ashley Clark, Jordan Cronk, Adam Lee Davies, Jennifer Dionisio, Rebecca Ellis, Paul Fairclough, João Ferreira, Jacques Gites, Simran Hans, Glenn Heath Jr, Trevor Johnston, Charlotte Keeys, Harrison Kelly, Jessica Kiang, Ian Mantgani, Katherine McLaughlin, Nick Pinkerton, Vadim Rizov, Kebba Sanneh, Bekzhan Sarsenbay, Emma Simmonds, Lloyd Stratton, Matt Thrift, Craig Williams, Josh Slater-Williams



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LWLIES:

What do you love about movies?

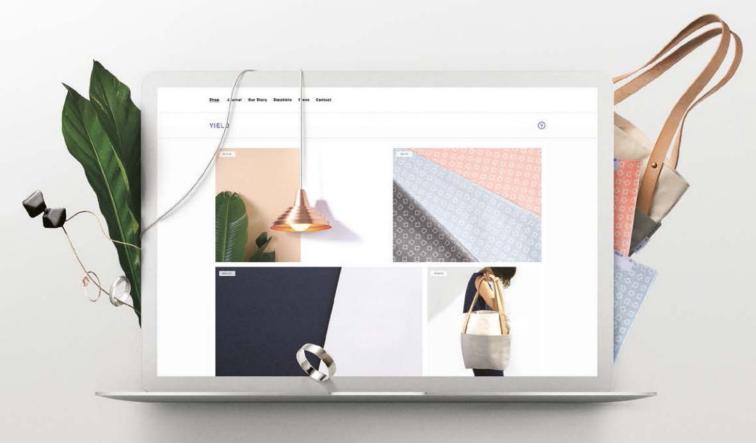
ROONEY MARA:

I mean, I love so much about movies, I couldn't say just one thing. I love the way they can make you feel. You can feel so many different things just watching a movie. You can feel deliriously happy and you can be laughing or you can feel really sad and emotional or you can feel super inspired. In Telluride I got to see about seven different films that reminded me why I love films. I also just love learning about people and watching stories about people. And I love photography and I love cinematography, the costumes, the music. I don't know... Just all of it.

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